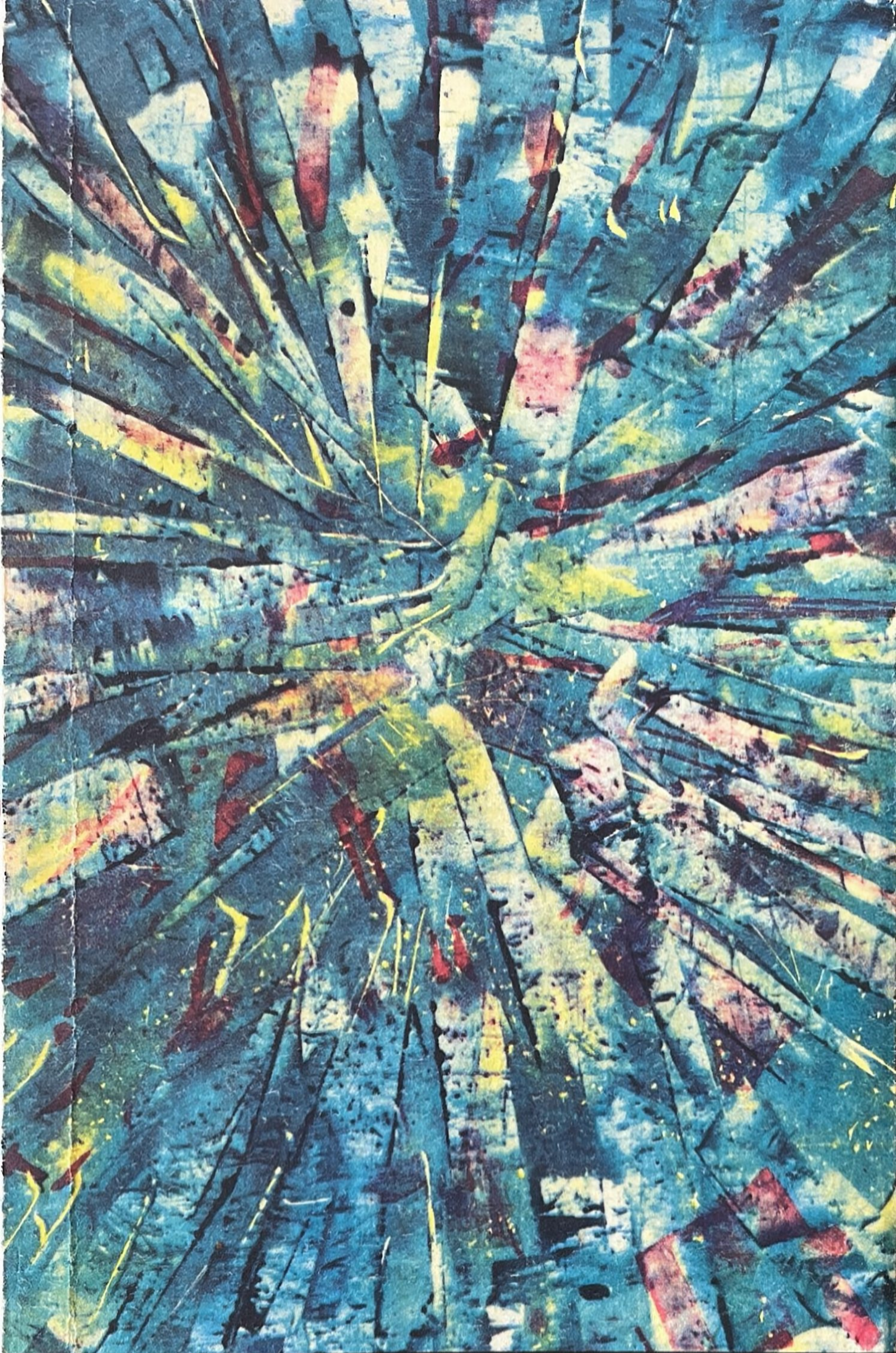




Czechoslovakia
CULTURE

The

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Series

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How good and wonderful a thing is work, the more so if the work we do is useful; but there is something equally good and wonderful, and that is to observe. To observe, to see and to discover, these are grand and rewarding things; but for these one must be able to let the imagination soar, and those who lack this quality are blind to all there is to be seen.

Karel Čapek, 1923

3.8.68
rojen priatelj
Zdeněk

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CULTURE

Orbis – Prague 1965

by Václav Pelíšek

Introduction

Perhaps you have been interested in Czechoslovakia for only a short time, perhaps for many years. You view this country from various parts of the world, far and near. Your interest is influenced by so many historical, geographical, biological and social factors that it would be foolish to try to anticipate all your questions. We know, however, that people everywhere have a lot in common. It is our fate to live together in this stormy century. We are its inquiring citizens and creators, and I think that in spite of everything that for the time being divides us, we love many of the same values. Hence it is possible to guess at least the general trend of your interest in Czechoslovakia, about which you have certainly heard words both of praise and criticism. There are worse things in relations among countries than uncritical admiration or categorical condemnation: there is cold indifference and spiritual isolation. That is one of the reasons for writing this small book about some aspects of Czechoslovak culture.

In writing this book, the author has found it very hard to remain coolly objective, as the search for truth demands. In order to avoid the pitfalls of his own enthusiasm for his country, he has tried to keep to the facts as much as possible. Indeed, in some places statistics have been included in spite of the fact that figures are not the most persuasive or precise measures of a culture. The author has tried, as far as possible, to suppress his own opinions and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. He knows from his own experience that love for the culture of his own nation does not crowd out but rather awakens the same feeling for the culture of other nations, to which he is grateful for many hours of enlightenment and enjoyment.

Its culture has nothing in it of the feelings evoked by life on the broad plains, or by vision constantly fixed on the distant horizon of the sea.

The High Tatras, considered as alpine with their eight-thousand-foot altitude chiefly out of regard for international terminology, are not overwhelming in their dimensions. They have their special beauty, however, a unique purity of style and an original profile. Seen from the south they arise suddenly, like a vision, with a clearly defined beginning and end, encompassing a wealth of rare plants and animals. This description contains a general conclusion which can be verified many times over in Czechoslovakia. The greatness of this country cannot be measured in dimensions and numbers, in mighty accomplishments and gestures. The stream of life here turns inward rather than outward. Thus a kind of world in miniature came into being among the great European empires, rich in internal strength and beauty which is neither monumental nor immediately obvious. It needs to be discovered, and has indeed already been discovered, as something quite new.

There are wide quiet spaces, enclosed in long belts of mountain forests, covering the ancient granite landscape of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. To the north and west, at the bottom of what were once oceans, lie long valleys, a chaos of sandstone towers and craters of burnt-out volcanoes, on whose slopes grow fruit and wine. The Carpathians form a dramatic arc. The hills of central Slovakia advance from west to east, their wild valleys frequently broken by deep woods and spots almost untouched by man, the kingdom of bears, wild boar and other game. There is fishing country, but how different it is from ocean harbours. Its melancholy is born from the calm mirrors of thousands of artificial

lakes of the peaceful wooded south Bohemian plains. Not far away is the cheerful, sunny grain and vineyard country of southern Moravia and Slovakia, communities noted for their fiery temperament and song, the Czechoslovak equivalent of the south of Europe.

Nature and man

The changing face of the landscape is accompanied by the regular rhythm of colours and moods. Nature alters her face every three months, going from one extreme to another, for the calming influence of the sea is little felt here. The dead quiet of snowy winter changes in the course of a few weeks into the intensive, overpowering explosion of the biological instincts of spring, the hot, fertile summer is with difficulty extinguished in the endlessly varied, subdued sentiment of autumn. We are people of reason, science and technology, and nature is for us primarily the object of our proud victory, proof of our strength and civilisation. And yet we are continuously overcome by its beauty, its power, the stream of life on which we come into the world and on which we leave it. Its movement and its greatness are apparent in the intensity and extremes of these annual changes. That is why it has gripped the citizens of this land so strongly. That is why so much poetry is written and read here, why there are countless folksongs about love, why the lyric and the lyrical mean so much to us. Perhaps we will be forgiven this in some less rational century.

The more we are bewitched by the ancient enchantment of natural elements, the more evident are the traces of man's activity, the imprint of his hand, his will and his fantasy, giving the landscape nobility and life. Even on desolate, cloudy, rainy days there is very

little real sadness in it. It is too full of reminders of man's activity. This apparent lack of the tragic is an illusion; the country's mild and smiling face has all too often looked on individual and national tragedy.

The ruins of medieval castles crown many hilltops; hundreds of mansions, towers and churches dot the landscape: landmarks created by man. Side by side, on the slopes and in the valleys, lie towns and villages, huddled together in the Czech regions, spread out in Slovakia. They are joined by tree-lined roads and paths; people here obviously felt the need to meet often. Several nationalities live together in this relatively small area – Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians and Germans. The cultures of these nationalities have been so interwoven that the differences in ways of life up and down the country follow the pattern of regions rather than nationalities.

Earliest history

In this country, as everywhere else in the world, culture is the product of man's origin, evidence of the level he has reached on his climb towards humanity. Human beings have lived on this earth for about 6,000,000 years. Nature has only gradually and almost by chance given scientists the evidence which permits us to penetrate the night of prehistoric times. Archaeological discoveries grow in proportion to man's efforts to penetrate below the surface of the earth. Museums are filled with new evidence, scientific research is expanding. The territory of Czechoslovakia is being systematically examined according to the plan drawn up by the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

As in other European museums, there is material evi-

12

dence here of the life and culture of the middle and late Palaeolithic periods. Music-lovers are pleased by the report that 50,000 years ago in Bohemia man blew on a pipe made from the joint of an animal's toe. There are rich discoveries of the so-called Gravettian culture, dating back 25,000 years. Among these is the famous statuette, the Moravian "Venus of Věstonice", symbol of the magic power of fertility. Many objects from the Magdalenian (post-Ice-Age) period provide interesting evidence of the beginnings of medieval art. There are unique neolithic Moravian-Slovak coloured ceramics, evidence of the admirable culture of the first agricultural tribes of eastern Slovakia, rich relics of the Únětice culture of the beginnings of the Bronze Age, and of other important cultures which peoples crossing the virgin forests of Central Europe brought with them at the dawn of Greek civilisation. Not quite half a century before our era, the Celts left their mark here, while the Scythian invasion extended into the eastern territory. The Czech lands received their Latin name, Bohemia, from the Celtic tribe of Boians. This period has left us one unique find, in addition to gold and silver coins: a human head, cut out of marl, found near Mšecké Žehrovice.

About the time of Julius Ceasar's greatest glory more political and cultural changes took place in the forest-covered reaches of Central Europe. Waves of Germanic tribes, the Marcomanni and Quadi, crossed our land. The present territory of Czechoslovakia reaches to the Roman-Teutonic battle line and into the sphere of Roman, Celtic and Germanic cultural influence. Typical of this period was Marbod, a Marcoman ruler, brought up as a hostage in the court of Augustus in the Roman spirit. From workshops in northern Italy and from Capua, numerous handicraft products and artistic objects found their way to this country – collections of

13

vases and bronze vessels, pails, pans, pitchers, and *terra sigillata*. Below the earth lay dead soldiers and noblemen with the arms and trappings of the expeditions of Marcus Aurelius and the last of the Roman emperors and chiefs of provinces.

The Great Moravian Empire

As the line of battle receded and when Rome finally fell, new peoples found their way here, and from here to the Danube basin and the Balkans. The numerous Slav tribes who settled permanently brought their own culture which was confronted with that of the Romans, particularly at the southern border between present-day Moravia and Slovakia. From this focal point there rapidly grew up a new political and cultural centre of western Slavs – Great Moravia. In the eighth to ninth centuries it was an empire reaching as far as the Adriatic and the Baltic. In recent years, Czechoslovak archaeologists have made important discoveries in this area. To date the foundations of twenty Christian churches and secular buildings have been uncovered. Without letting ourselves be carried away by the power relationships of the time and the size of the empire, it is important to note that these discoveries have made it necessary to relinquish the time-honoured conceptions about our Slav forefathers as primitive farmers, caring only for their fields. In fact there was at this time a complex social structure with advanced stone architecture, and highly-developed crafts. The Roman-provincial cultural influence, the Byzantine Adriatic style- and the influence of the Scottish-Irish Christian mission combine in a special form of expression. Walking around the foundations of the churches and buildings of these former Slav communities, we better understand the creative strength of people who

so quickly, after their long wanderings, and in their new settlements, found monumental expression for their endeavours, for their political and religious ideas.

While all the influences of past cultures are at least indirectly reflected in the ninth century, this century marks the stage when cultural development became linked with Christianity, with writing and the beginnings of our recorded history. From these remote times, which until recent archaeological discoveries were obscured by legend, there extends down to our day the unbroken vaulting of Czechoslovak culture, Czech and Slovak art, a millenium of spiritual and material effort by the people in Central Europe. This knowledge has tremendous importance for us. It is not only a matter of a cultural family tree, of tradition, or even of evidence of one's own creative forces, which succeeded in combining in their own way such varied European and world cultures. Most important is the fact that this thousand-year culture makes its contemporary existence felt every day. At a time so unquiet, so disturbed by wonder at the tremendous power which science and technology give man, many hopes are aroused, accompanied, however, by deep and dark fears. Will not these forces so alienate man that he will destroy the sources from which he sprang?

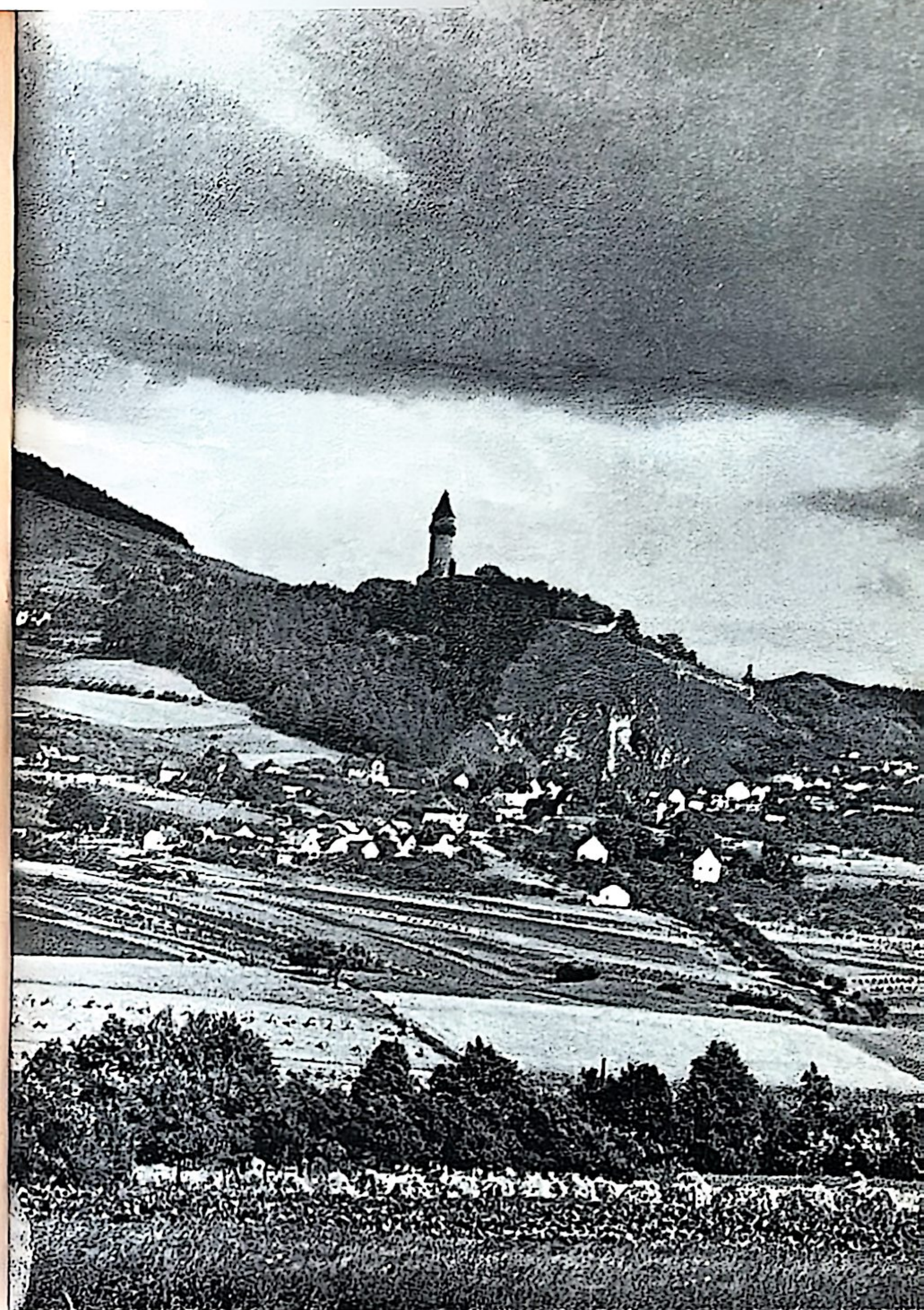
At such times there is a sharp rise in the value of everything simply human, of wisdom and good-heartedness, of a sense of beauty and humour, of feeling and understanding. Ability to see the individual, whether in gigantic social conflicts of millions of people or in tremendous technological designs, gains in esteem.

Notwithstanding the great changes which have taken place in the organisation of society, in the development of man's understanding of science and of powerful

technological forces, which seem to give us, people of the twentieth century, the right to look at our past as though from the heights into a deep valley from which we have emerged, we stand again and again enchanted and moved before the works of masters and builders long since dead. They teach us modesty. Through them history constantly reminds us that man remains man, even though he shifts from one historical plane to another. In spite of the relative rigidity of mental patterns which each century imposes upon its artists, the breath of mankind pervades them all. Man, his human greatness and creative artistic force, embodied and objectivised in his works, effects every one who is able to comprehend, and does not inquire about age, passport, religion or colour of skin. People are brought closer together even today, after centuries, demonstrating that in addition to the hierarchy of time there is another, equally powerful, time-cancelling hierarchy of values.

Monuments and other wealth

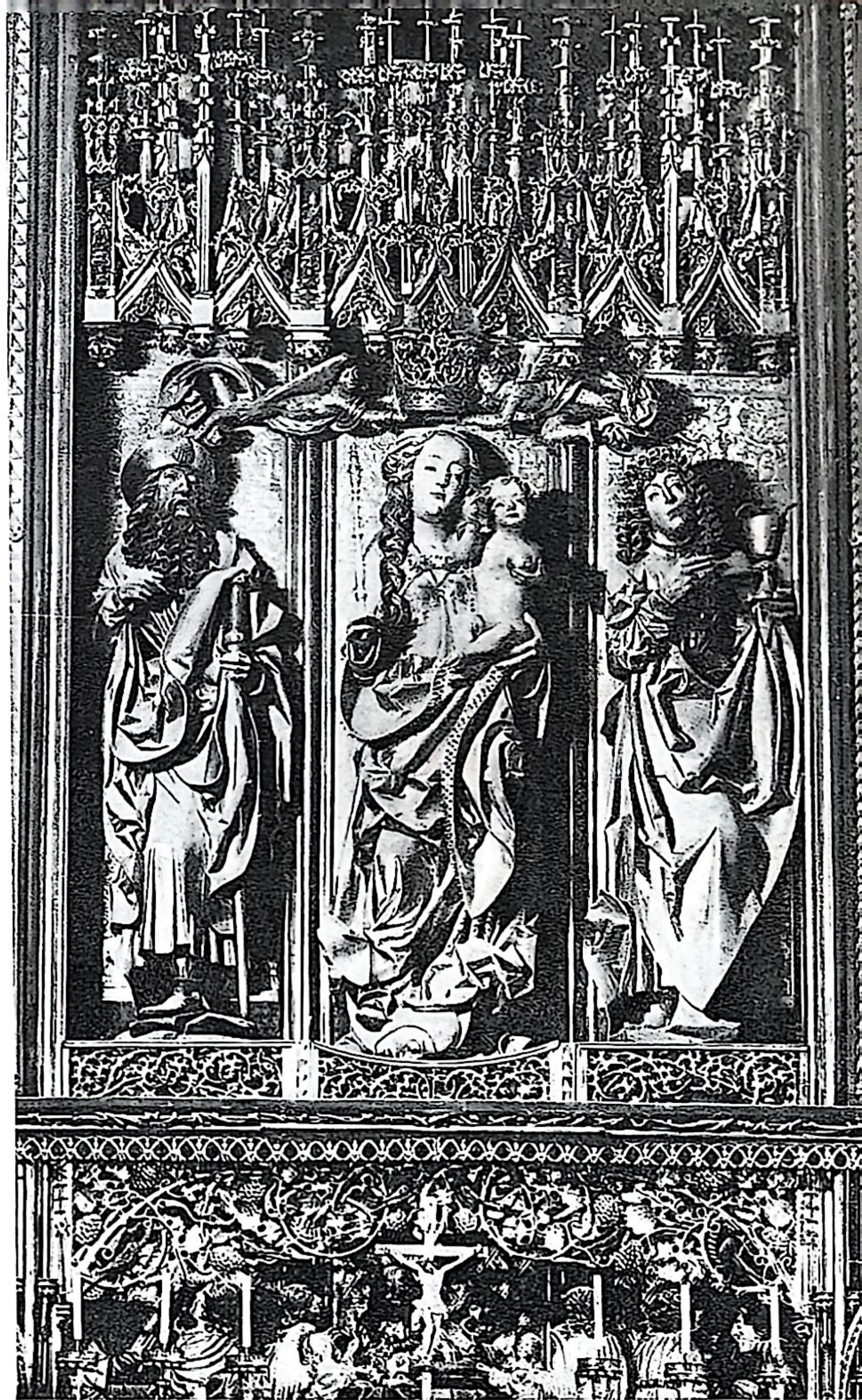
History, which has so often marched through this land to the roll of war drums, when armies in their thousands trampled the country from north to south or from west to east and back again, not only brought destruction but also restored and created from generation to generation. This is illustrated in architecture particularly. Few countries have such a complete collection of monuments representing every period of the past thousand years. Every style has left its mark here. Hundreds of castles, mansions, Gothic quarters and Renaissance towns, thousands of smaller structures and statues, handicraft products, libraries and museums filled with valuable documents and exhibits, musical archives, provide incontrovertible evidence. Not even the second



Štramberk – north Moravia



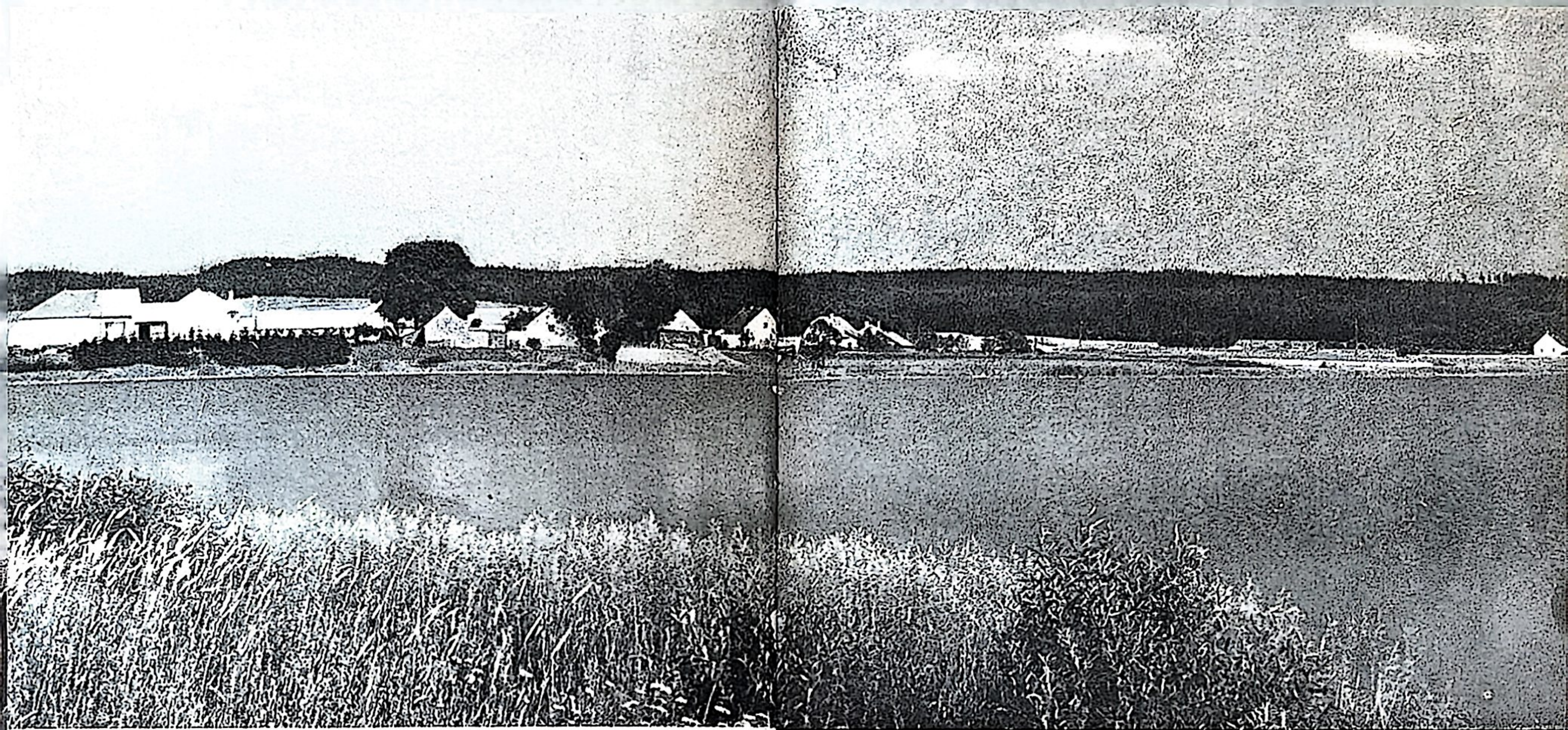
Foundations of a 9th-century Romanesque basilica
at Mikulčice (Great Moravian Empire)



Detail of the Gothic altar by Master Pavol (St.
James', Levoča)



Wrought silver cross and brooch (Great Moravia)

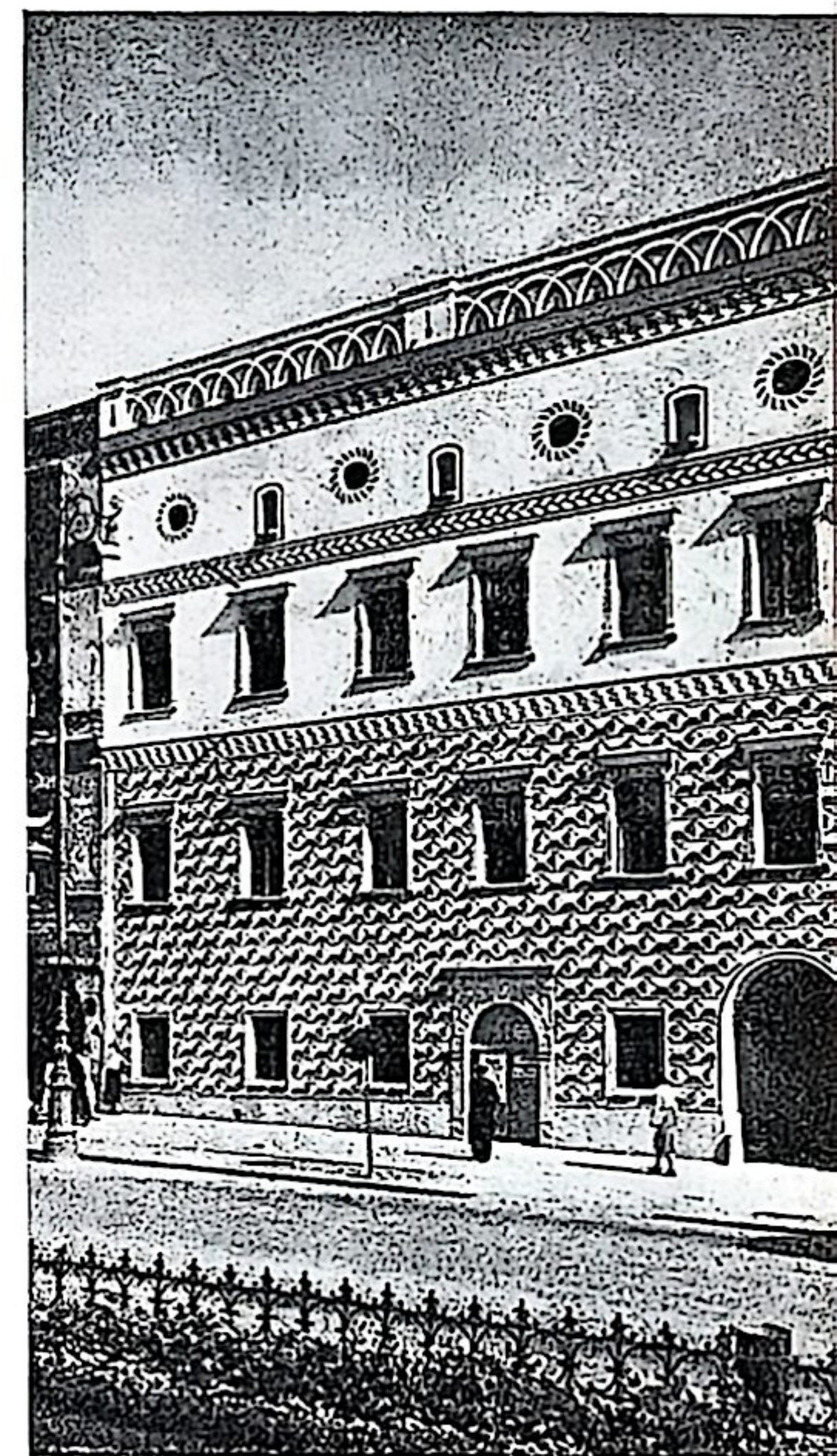


South Bohemia

Tábor -
Renaissance
Town Hall



Banská Bystrica -
the Thurzo-Fugger House





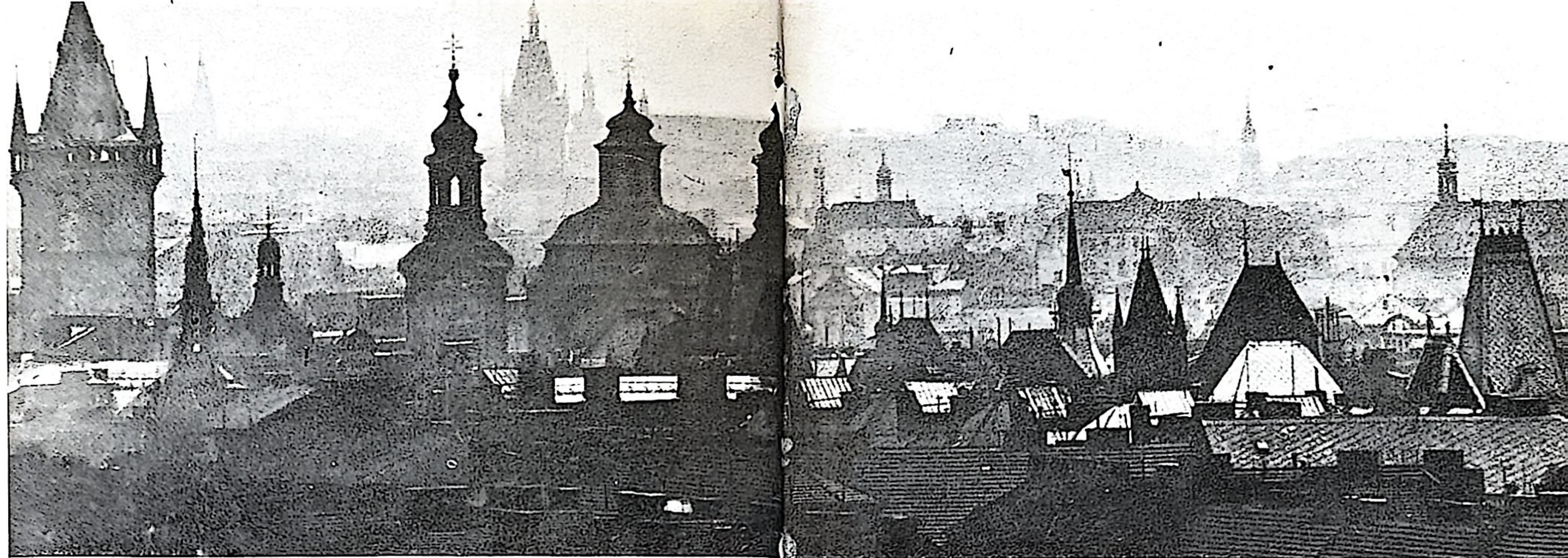
Matyáš Braun
(Kuks Mansion) -
from the cycle
The Blessed



from the cycle
Vices

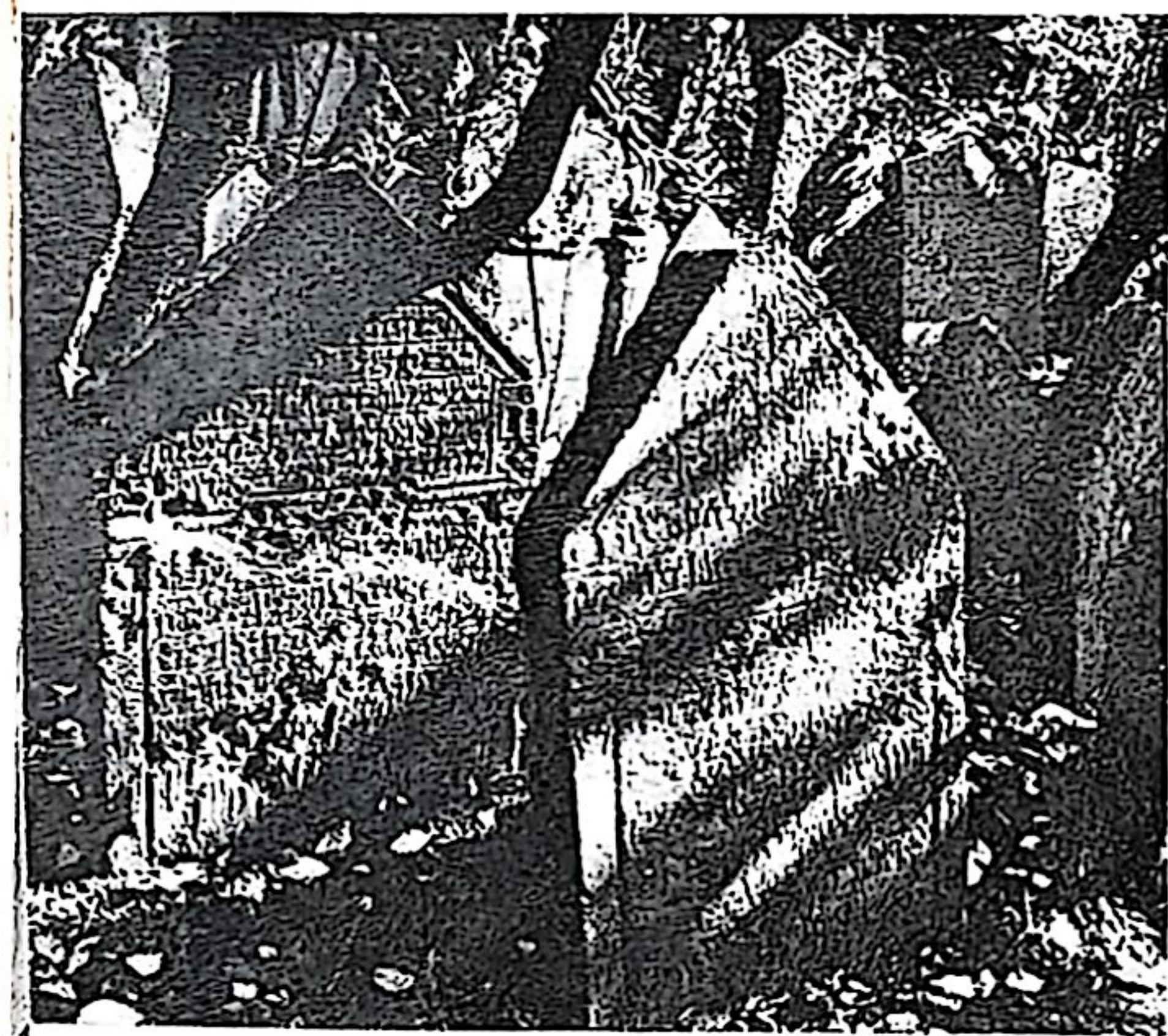
The Adrspach Rocks - north-east Bohemia





The towers and spires of Prague

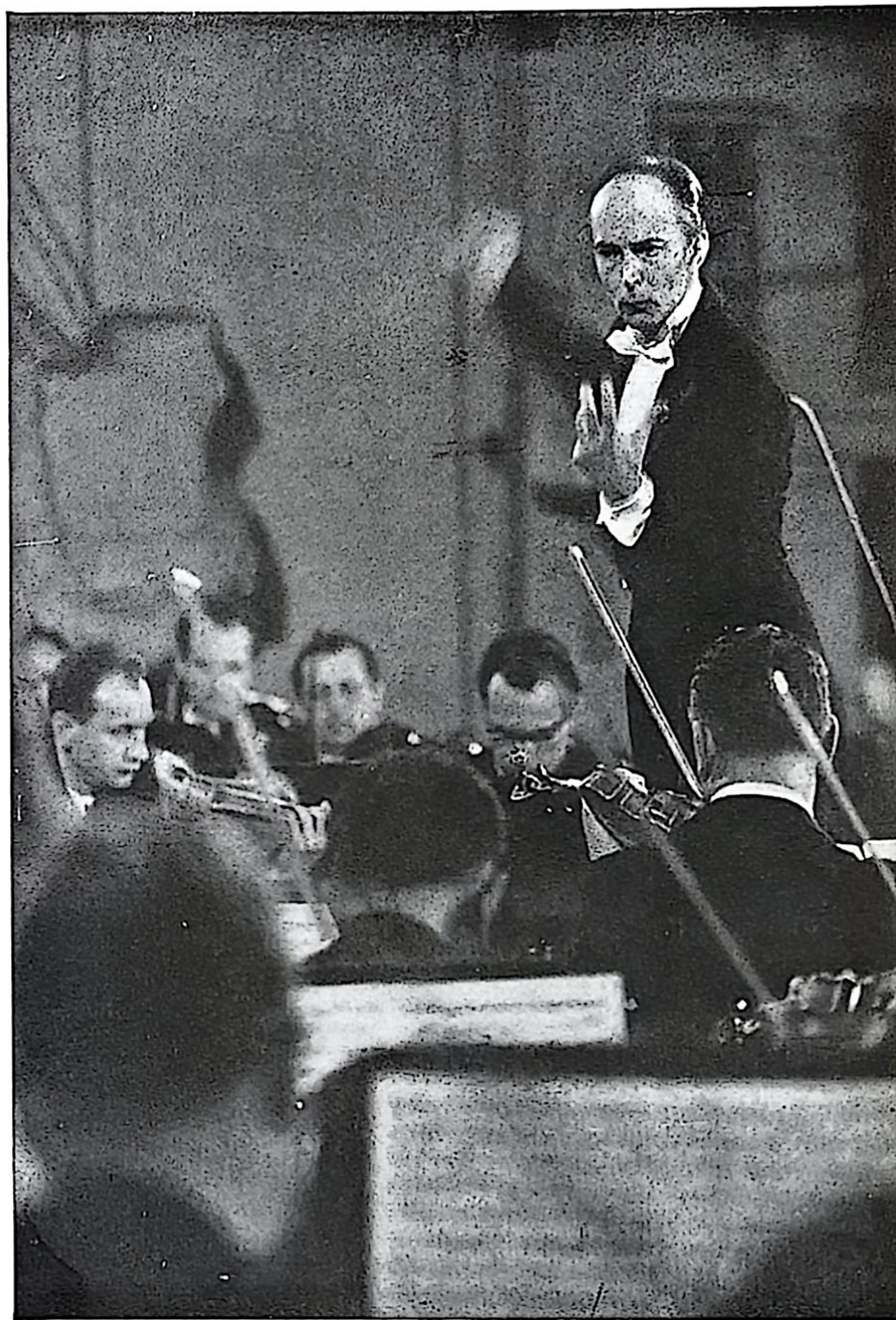
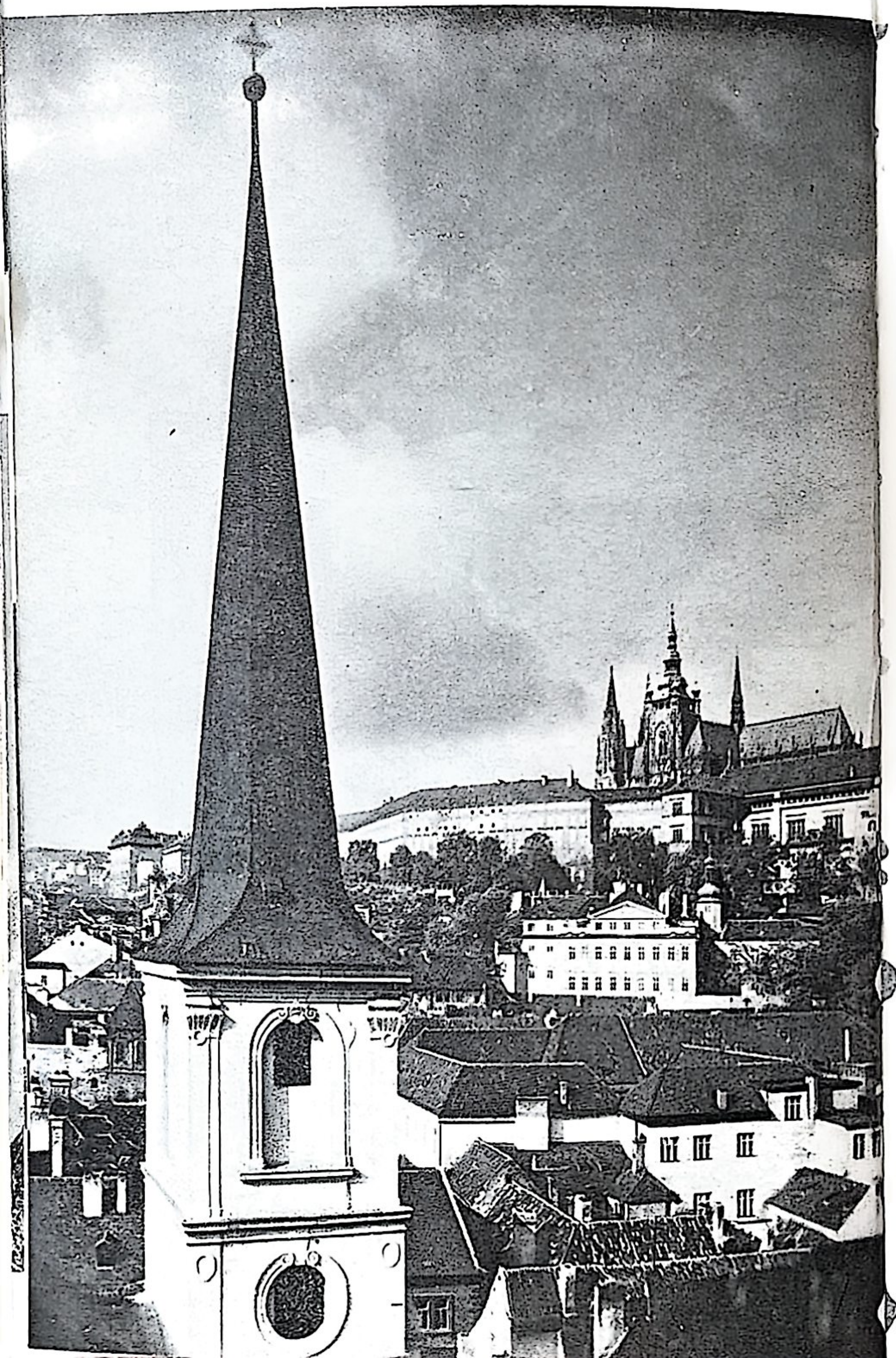
**The Prague
Jewish Cemetery**



The Little Quarter



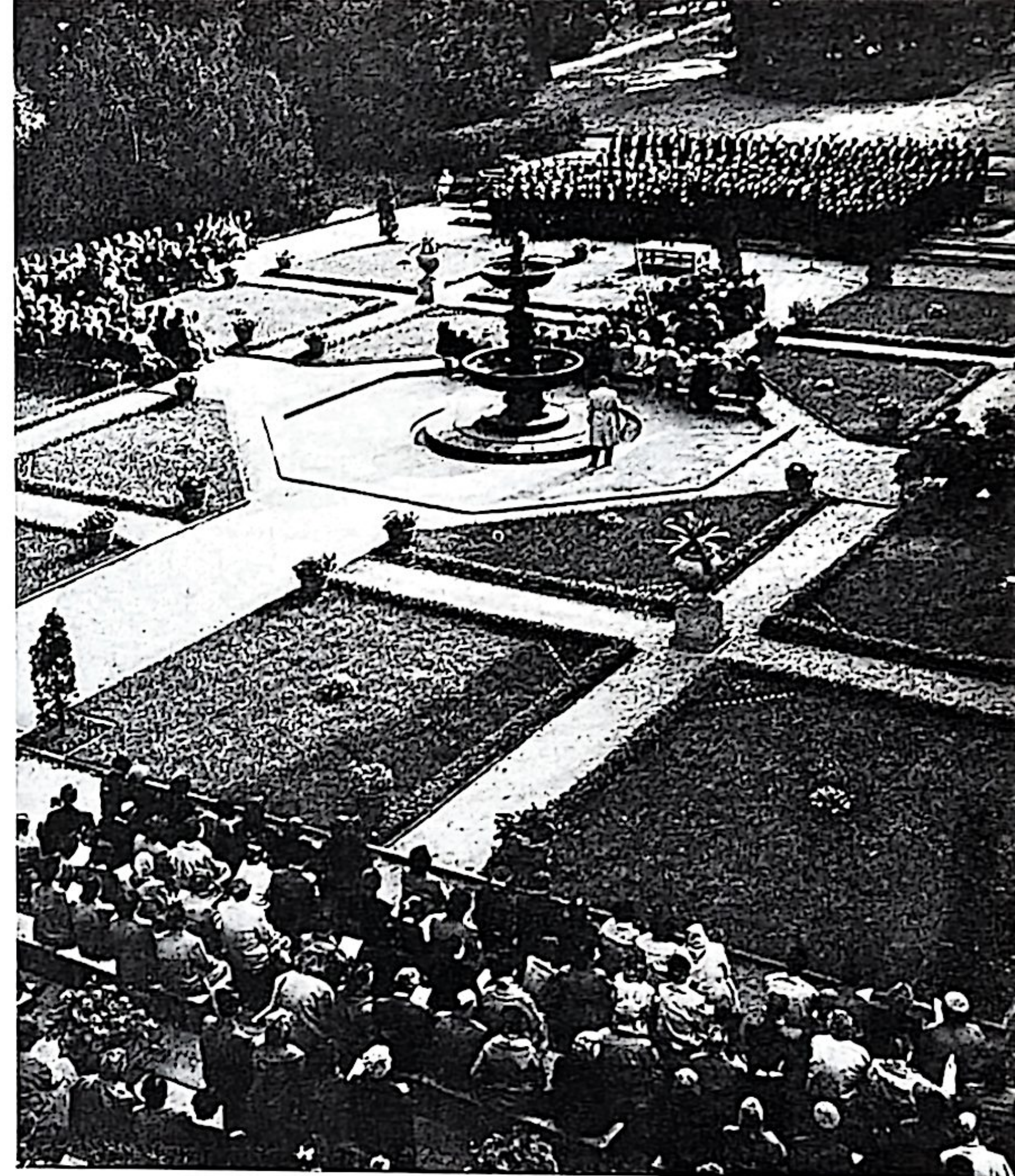
Prague Castle



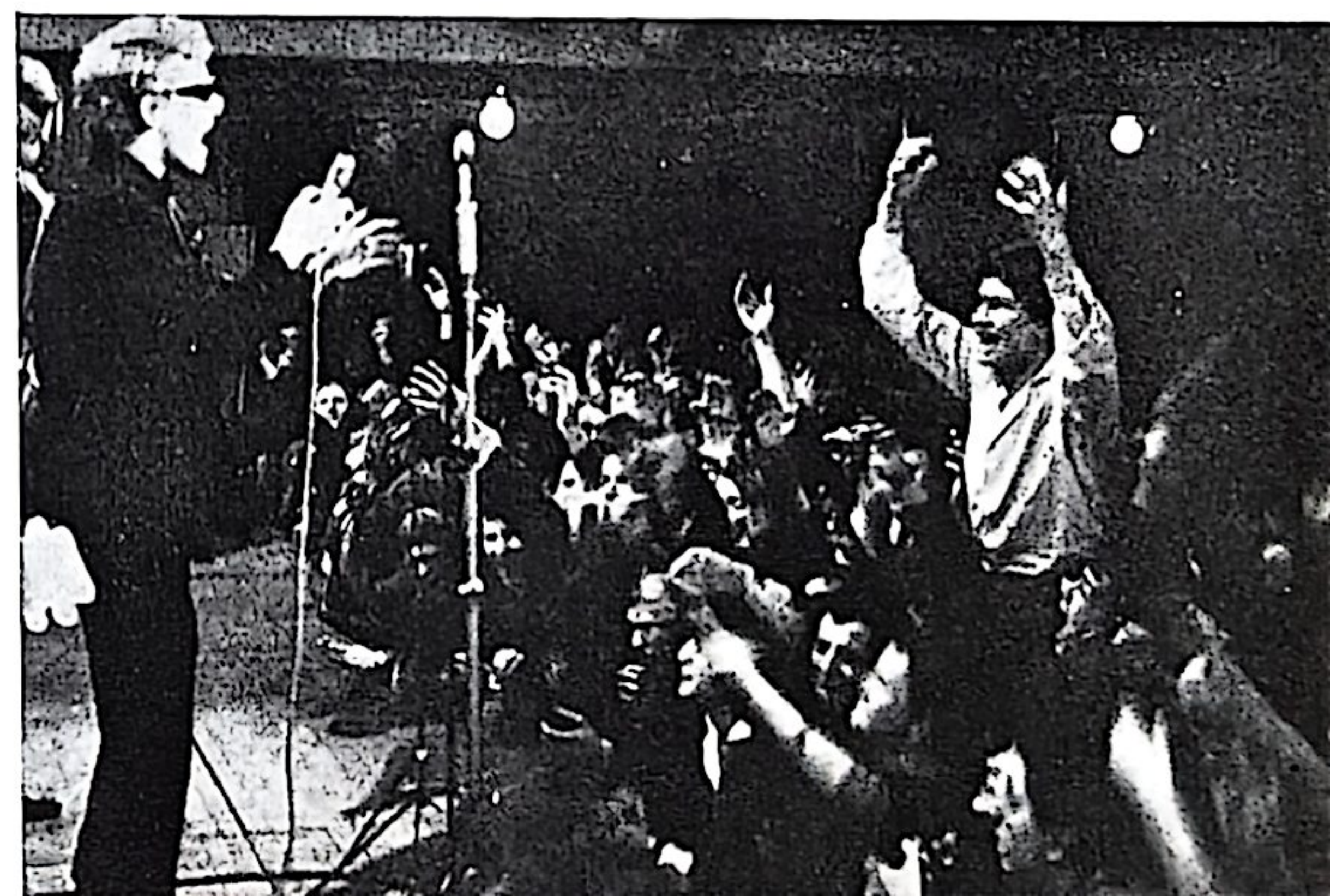
Prague Spring Music Festival 1964
I. Markewitch (Italy) conducting the Czech Phil-
harmonic

A Prague Spring Concert in the Belvedere Garden

Karel Krautgartner's jazz orchestra



A beat concert



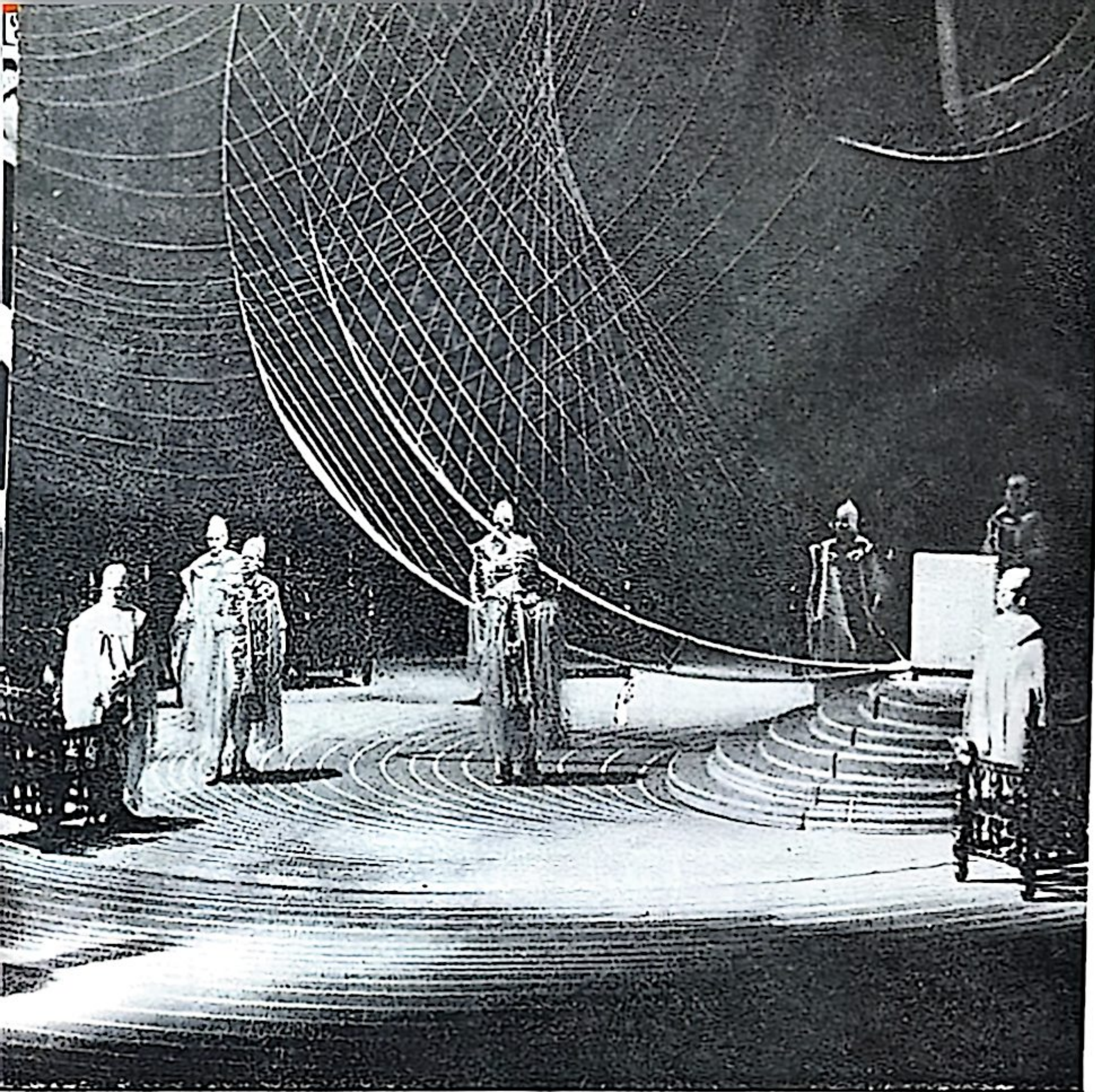


Semafor - one of Prague's youngest theatres

Mime at the Theatre on the Balustrades



Prague National Theatre. Janáček's opera, The House of the Dead (set by J. Svoboda)



Bratislava National Theatre. The Sun Still Sets over Atlantis by Vítězslav Nezval (set by L. Vychodil)

Scene from the Magic Lantern Theatre



world war, which wreaked such havoc on much of Europe, destroyed this wealth, which is still far from being completely investigated and catalogued. Only recently the history of European art was enriched by the discovery in the depositories of the Prague Castle Gallery of 16th- and 17th-century paintings including works by Veronese, Tintoretto and a Rubens; a hitherto unknown cello concerto by Haydn was found in the archives of the National Museum, the manuscript of an unknown drama by the Spanish playwright Calderon in Mladá Vožice Castle library. A rich treasury of historical and artistic material still awaits full evaluation.

Since 1945 millions of crowns have been spent on the restoration and maintenance of historic and artistic monuments. The government has taken the responsibility for protecting historical objects declared worthy of preservation, not only by the usual legal measures, but by carrying out reconstruction and restoration in special state enterprises and workshops established for the purpose. This includes the preservation of a wealth of interior furnishings. The government maintains a special national agency – the State Institute for the Preservation of Historic Monuments and the Protection of Nature, whose activity is extended through similar institutes in every region.*) Their experts act as advisers to the government and local authorities on the protection of monuments and nature. They work in cooperation with the State Institute for the Reconstruction of Towns. To give an idea of the extent of this work, it may be mentioned that among the thousands of objects under protection are the historic cores of more than 30 towns which are part of busy urban centres, and whose reconstruction and maintenance are very costly

*) Czechoslovakia is divided into 11 administrative units = regions. The regions are in turn divided into districts, of which there are 108. There is a total of about 12,000 communities.

and technically difficult; there may be hundreds of historically valuable residential buildings in a single town. More than 90 Czech and Slovak national cultural monuments are protected by special legislation. It is difficult to find a new function for structures whose original purpose is outmoded without disturbing the original conception of the building.

One thing facilitates the work of art historians, architects and restorers; the fact that all historically and artistically valuable structures are state property. Working against them are time, the Central European climate, and long decades of neglect. It is not within the powers of one generation to restore all the splendid evidence of its cultural development for Europe. A visitor now has, however, access to newly restored castles and mansions, he can walk through their interiors, courtyards and parks, lose his way in the narrow streets of Gothic towns or the arcades of Renaissance squares, penetrate the courtyards and living quarters of centuries-old burghers' homes, stop for a while in the wooden churches of Slovakia or the baroque churches of Prague.

Prague

The greatest of all the architectural treasures of Czechoslovakia is Prague. Built around its crooked silver axis, the Vltava river, the city creates an irregular outline, on hillocks, slopes and in valleys, slipping down to the river. It exudes that intimate and warm confidence which a city gains after centuries in which it has been entrusted with the uninterrupted current of life of generations which has left values here, layer upon layer, to form a new whole. The breath of the past is mixed with the present, the great figures of local and European culture whose influence was felt here, and the spiritual

streams which carried them, have created the present atmosphere of the city as well as its past.

Old Prague is built of stone, and has the solemn face of a northern city which requires September sunshine, the whiteness of snow, or green tree-tops to set it off. It has none of the grandiose pomp of the capitals of ruling powers. Below the monumental panorama of Prague Castle lies everyday life, the world of surprising views, changes and details, little squares, narrow crooked streets, archways and open spaces, gardens, parks and approaches to bridges, buildings of irregular outline, courtyards, lively inns and taverns. One almost envies the children who grow up in the Old Town and the Little Quarter or around the Castle, and live here surrounded as a matter of course with the beauty of the ages – with the playful indifference of youth. Without knowing it, they draw from their surroundings, together with admiration for rockets and satellites, for automobiles and airplanes in a period of such amazing technical efficiency, a feeling for the unique, for the culture of the senses and the emotions.

The city grew up on the site of the original settlement which existed from the earliest times at the ford across the Vltava. Communities were built around two castles, the Hradčany and Vyšehrad which, on opposite banks, probably guarded the frontier for two great Slav tribes whom the river separated, the Czechs and the Zličans. This was the crossroad of trade routes which otherwise led through the impenetrable forests of the Near East to the Baltic and from west to east. The Arabian-Jewish merchant, Ibrahim ibn Jacob passed through here in 965 and describes Prague as a wealthy trading centre.*)

*) "The city of Frága is built of stone and lime and is the largest city of trade, Russians and Slavs coming here with goods from the city of

Parts of Prague which are in the city today, residential quarters and factory districts, were already settled in the tenth to fourteenth centuries. In those days, of course, they were villages and settlements obviously gay and lively, for all around the core of the city vineyards were planted on the southern slopes.

Romanesque style

The city has an interesting Romanesque and pre-Romanesque history. Archaeological finds provide evidence of its character as a metropolis at the height of the Romanesque period – about the year 1200: some 50 stone churches and houses, two castles, a stone bridge, sculpture and paintings. The Romanesque style survived longer here than in West Europe, and the first signs of Gothic date from about 1230.

Gothic

Gothic Prague is evidence of the greatness and the expansive spirit of its builders, particularly the Czech King and Roman Emperor, Charles IV, who brought together outstanding European builders, sculptors and craftsmen for a creative project which still arouses admiration today. Its builders were Matyáš of Arras and Peter Parler. This was also the time of Petrarch's and Cola di Rienzi's stay here. Prague University was founded (1348), the stone bridge which no tourist fails to cross was built, both castles and residential districts

Craców. Muslims likewise come here from the land of the Turks, Jews and Hungarians with goods. From there they export slaves, tin and many kinds of hides. Their land is the best of the lands of the northern nations and the richest in food. There they sell for one kinshar enough grain for a man for a month and for one kinshar so much barley that it is enough for a mount for forty nights. Ten hens may be obtained there for one kinshar."

of Prague grew up in beauty. The New Town, the city district of which Wenceslas Square is a part, represents a unique Gothic municipal unit, and today still functions as part of a metropolis, thanks to the large-mindedness of its founder.

Face to face with the many monuments of this time which have been preserved, it is still possible to visualise Gothic Prague, which remained almost unchanged for two centuries: both mighty Gothic castles on the steep banks of the river, hundreds of new burghers' houses, in what was then the modern conception of a city, on both sides of the river, joined by a bridge with proud Gothic towers at either end. The whole was protected and enclosed by strong crenellated ramparts, above which hundreds of towers were visible from a great distance, and the whole submerged in green gardens and slopes. For a long time it remained the foremost city of Europe, creating an impression of magnificence, beauty and assurance.

Renaissance

The deep-rooted character of Prague Gothic prevented Renaissance forms from making themselves emphatically felt. It is true that one can see in the Vladislav Hall of Prague Castle the first evidence of Renaissance north of the Alps, dating from 1493; there is also the Belvedere summer palace, a beautiful work of pure Italian Renaissance dating from the middle of the 16th century. But these only serve to emphasise the individual nature of the experiments, which usually ended in a compromise between Gothic and Renaissance principles, in which Renaissance influenced the interiors and found its way into the shape of the structure in single features only. Prague gradually gave way to its

influence, to be sure; Gothic had become exhausted and outlived its time, fires made their contribution, and rulers too. Rudolf II is remembered today as the eccentric emperor who was enamoured of Renaissance art and alchemy, and who filled Prague Castle with splendid paintings.

Baroque

The final victory of Italian cultural influence took the form of baroque in the 17th century. Unfortunately it coincides with dark periods in the history of the Czech nation, with the loss of independence after the defeat of the Czech Protestant Estates by the Catholic Hapsburgs in 1620 at the Battle of the White Mountain. This was the period of the Thirty Years' War and of economic decline, of religious and national oppression, the suppression of the Czech nobility, of persecution, the period of emigration of the Czech intelligentsia. In spite of these circumstances, Prague's late baroque is unique in the world, and represents the second greatest flowering of building activity and artistic development after the 14th century. It underlines the contention of historians that periods of unusual development in the arts do not necessarily coincide with the forward movement of society as a whole.

Like everything which comes from the outside without organic connection with domestic culture, the first period of Prague baroque was short-lived and imitative. The outstanding Czech painter and generally talented Karel Škréta was an exception at the end of the 17th century. But in the first half of the 18th century baroque became the ruling style in Prague, completely original in its manifestations and able to vie with the Italian. This period gave birth to the palaces of the

Little Quarter, preserved in their original appearance, and numerous churches. Among the names of outstanding builders are those of Giovanni Santini, Dientzenhofer, V. M. Kaňka. The interiors of churches and palaces, courtyards and parks were filled with valuable sculpture and paintings by F. M. Brokoff, Matyáš Braun, Petr Brandl, V. V. Rainer – to name the most important. The steep slope below Prague Castle was changed into a charming garden with loggias and summerhouses, where today concerts are heard, lovers hide, and students with books in their hands pretend to study.

Behind the high walls encircling palaces, gardens full of shrubs and trees were planted, blooming with flowers imported from abroad and mirrored in ponds. An effervescent stream of life whirled around these palaces; breweries expanded, new taverns were established many of which still exist today. Building and artistic activity reflected the expectation that Prague would again become the seat of rulers. This hope was not fulfilled, however, and she was relegated by Vienna to centuries of stagnation. The enchantment and charm provided by Prague baroque and the Little Quarter especially did not weaken, however. The palaces and their gardens with concert podiums and stages are now open to all. One is reluctant to leave them for the straight modern streets of the big city and the rush of everyday life.

The Jewish Town

Not far from the opposite bank of the Vltava, in the very centre of Prague, are the remains of the former Jewish towns whose origins reach into the ninth century. On the relatively small area of the former ghetto are six synagogues, calling attention to this special and yet inseparable social and architectural unit of medieval

Prague. The shadowy, quiet interiors of the temples, built in the most varied styles, contain valuable documents of an historical and religious character, evidence of Jewish culture and its continuity. In the Jewish museum, which is among the largest in the world, is a collection of 10,000 sacred hangings and cloths, including torah curtains and mantles which provide the most complete evidence of the history of brocade and embroidery work from the 17th to the 20th centuries. There are valuable handicraft articles in silver and tin. A hushed peace pervades the interior of the Old-New Synagogue, one of the earliest Gothic buildings in Prague (1270).

Behind a high wall lies the wild, overgrown Jewish Cemetery. Layer upon layer, whole generations of Prague Jews (from 1439 to the 18th century) rest here. In the adjoining synagogue the names of 78,000 Czechoslovak Jews who died in nazi concentration camps are written on the walls. With indescribable feelings we read the poems and look at the pictures made by children in the Terezín ghetto, children with the prematurely bitter outlook of small beings who, having hardly been born, must ponder death.

Nearly 12,000 gravestones, some flat slabs and others tombs which have sunk into the ground, gaze up from the elderberry bushes to the crowns of the high trees. Along the paths cutting across the uneven surface of the cemetery we can wander for hours, reading the gravestones, to meet once more the legendary Rabbi Jehuda ben Bezalel Löw, the celebrated creator of the Golem. His tomb is almost covered with pebbles placed there by pious Jews. People still put small pieces of paper, on which they have written their secret wishes and their desire for happiness, health and love, into its small opening. Here too one can meet the wise

Mordecai Mayzl or the beautiful Hendela Basseviova. Here we can finally understand much of the writing of Franz Kafka and the enchantment of many writers, poets and artists who have sat here in the silence on a bench or a stone, or walked the paths. After visiting here the French poet Appollinaire wrote his lines about the hands of the clock in the Jewish Town Hall which "move backwards", while the poet

*"Backward through his own life slowly
Retreating as he climbs Hradčany hill,
Hears the sound of Czech songs from little inns."*

Monuments outside Prague

There is tremendous architectural and artistic wealth outside the capital city. Unique Romanesque and Gothic monuments can be found in many smaller towns.

Renaissance urban units built on Gothic foundations are scattered throughout the Republic. The sunny cheer of their harmonious shapes and the quiet rhythm of their material has an unfading charm. Levoča, Telč, Slavonice, Banská Štiavnica and Banská Bystrica, Tábor, Bardejov, Prachatice, Český Krumlov, Prešov, Nové Město nad Metují, Litomyšl, České Budějovice, Český Krumlov, Pardubice, Jindřichův Hradec, Třebíč, Domažlice, Znojmo, Mikulov, and other towns bearing this Renaissance influence, have kept their character and magic to this day in spite of later influences and changes. Hundreds of mansions and summer seats of the nobility, scattered singly through the Bohemian and Moravian countryside, belong to this catalogue. The centuries have left here an extraordinary wealth which is an attraction not only to experts but to ordinary tourists.

Folk architecture Our time

The villages have been built in remarkable harmony with the landscape. This is to be seen, above all, in certain ethnographic areas of Czechoslovakia, accompanied by other characteristic expressions of artistic feeling. The individuality of architecture, art and speech is rapidly disappearing, however, under the pressure of the present, universally accepted style of life. Nevertheless, the harmony of towns, ancient buildings and far-off glimpses of white villages in the changing landscape will please the eye and spirit of the traveller.

Slovakia

From the architectural point of view, the eastern part of the country is particularly interesting. The landscape here has greater depths and heights and broader plains than in the western regions, white villages stretch out along paths and rivers, alternating with towns which in many cases are built on medieval foundations. The ruins of mansions and the steep rocky precipices strike a romantic note. The towns provide evidence of an independent conception of Gothic and Renaissance principles; in the Protestant areas of Slovakia Renaissance was the official style. The wooden churches and bell towers, of which there are about 100 in Slovakia, have unusual charm. They are permeated with the warmth of their material which has a special subdued beauty. For the church in Levoča, Master Pavol carved a wooden altar four-and-a-half centuries ago which enchanted hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Czechoslovak pavilion at the World Exhibition in Brussels in 1958. It is an amazingly mature work, with its many realistic, unschematic, psychologically diversified figures.

In the 19th and 20th centuries there were outstanding architects (Kotěra, Zítek, etc.), and whole municipal districts were built, residential areas, industrial sectors and public buildings. There was no unifying idea, however, no internal need to create a style. But this was not true of this country only; it was a sign of a time absorbed in a deeper ideal. The drive to satisfy the needs of masses of people pushed into the background the creation of more artistically valuable units, expressing a collective aim.

The latest Czechoslovak architecture likewise reflects more social consciousness and desire to satisfy elementary requirements than artistic endeavour. The extent of building is tremendous. It has given many people, those formerly on the lowest social scale, more daylight, cleanliness, air and decent living conditions than they ever had before. This is not to be underestimated. No architectural style reflecting new thinking has yet been born, however. The road from the preconditions to the finished work has just been opened.

Galleries

The wealth accumulated in historical buildings of all types makes of them natural museums – sometimes disorderly storehouses – of statues, paintings, prints, examples of craftsmanship and other works of art.*) About one million of the most valuable works are the property of the National Gallery in Prague and Bratislava. Others are in the remaining 35 galleries or in the Museum of Applied Arts in Prague, which has the largest

*) Cataloguing was completed in 1964.

collection of glass in the world. The largest ethnographic museum is in Brno.

Outstanding in the Prague National Gallery collection are the Gothic and baroque masters, the French Impressionists, the works of Rodin and Picasso, and the Czech moderns, especially the Cubists, who were co-founders of this European trend. About one hundred kilometres north of Prague at Benešov, noteworthy collections of oriental art have been installed in a former aristocratic mansion. Kuks Castle has a collection of works of the great baroque sculptor, Matyáš Braun. Other mansions, which today are used as galleries, house specialised collections. The old decor of mansion interiors often provides a very suitable background for the modern installation of exhibitions.

Contemporary art and tradition

The inertia of hundreds of years of tradition, often so enchanting, could easily turn into golden fetters, tying the hands of contemporary artists and acting as a brake on the new, modern, unusual and searching, on every serious and considered step forward. That such tendencies have existed cannot be denied. They have not been decisive, however, but have rather played the role of a corrective on contemporary artistic trends. Czechoslovak art is a living organism in which there is much creation, discussion and controversy; indeed, it is represented by 5,000 artists in all fields, including architects. They have the same hot blood and stubborn will as their predecessors. Their exhibitions in numerous galleries draw increasing attendance. Some one-man shows, like that of the Czech Impressionist Antonín Slavíček, was seen by half a million visitors in three months. The range of their artistic expression is un-

usually broad. Some have achieved international recognition, witness successes in Venice, London, Paris, Sao Paulo and the international exhibition of ceramics in Prague, the warm response to illustrations for children, the puppet and animated films and the illustrations of Jiří Trnka.

In general, Czechoslovak painting and sculpture won an exceptional position in the culture of the country at the very beginning of the 20th century. The calm before the storm of the first world war was a sign that the positive forces of culture were united in negating an outmoded world, the stale cliché and the pompous gesture, leftovers from the exhausted art of the last century; that they were seeking new values, new subject matter, a new idiom. In the apparently sluggish movement of history at that time there was nothing to excite sensitive souls yearning for the new, the sound and the beautiful, considering new truths and the grandeur of life. The source of movement was therefore sought in art itself, although history showed shortly thereafter that the time of dramatic and revolutionary acts had not passed. Thus it became a period of formal preparation in the visual arts, influencing in turn other fields of art, a workshop for new ideas of form, of modern language and expression, which later, in the twenties, were joined with the movements for national liberation and social revolution. Modern Czech art was represented at the beginning by Kubišta, Filla, Čapek, Šíma, Špála, Brunner, Kremlička, Gutfreund, Beneš, Janák, Gočár, Chochola, and accompanied by its theoreticians, expanded to include new names, turned to the needs of life, to social struggle, to the beauty of simplicity, to citizenship and to technological society. Its desire not to be an isolated, individualistic generation was beautiful and modern. The more it tried to merge with the current of surrounding life, the more its originality was

enhanced, the more it created real personalities and enriched its form.

Czechoslovak art seems to have preserved these characteristics down to today. It would be better, however, to go and see it for one's self beneath the roofs of old-fashioned apartment houses, in the studios of artists, smelling of clay and paint, where the whole atmosphere is full of the charm of creation.

Music

Up to now we have observed Czechoslovakia with our eyes. Now, however, it is time to listen. Music is among the greatest values of this country. Without succumbing to romanticism and mysticism, one can speak of a national talent for music in Czechs and Slovaks. An examination of the life of the people would show that from the earliest times music has been a need and a passion, that they have demonstrated a notable ability in composition and interpretation. A great wealth of folk songs has been preserved. The tradition of folk musicians, chamber and dance ensembles and choirs, is being carried on, even if television and radio have shifted the balance between active and passive musical experience to the side of the latter. The music schools today have more than 100,000 pupils; interest in the study of music exceeds the number of educational establishments, however. The one-hundred and-fifty-year-old history of the Prague Conservatory is also evidence of the tradition. Testimony to the quality of Czechoslovak music is its international success, which has continued uninterrupted for decades, indeed centuries. If the English musicologist Charles Burney were to return today, he might well repeat his statement of 200 years ago that after Italy this was the most musical country in Europe and Europe's conservatory.

Historical excursions

Roughly one thousand years ago St. Vojtěch – and there are some doubts as to whether it was really he – composed the Czech hymn *Hospodine pomiluj ny* ("God Have Mercy Upon Us"). This song has not yet disappeared entirely from the repertoire of Czech musical ensembles, although it is rarely heard. The same applies to another song about the Czech Prince, St. Wenceslas, dating from the end of the 13th century. Both have become symbols, lost their religious significance, and are something like secular national prayers. Hitler considered it necessary to forbid their public performance. The former is the oldest Czech musical score to have been preserved.

Most of the songs from this period have unfortunately been lost. Undoubtedly they were less majestic, but they sprang from their composers' lives and accompanied them in good times and in bad. They were songs and ballads of the daily joys and sorrows, of lovers' sentiments and high spirits, even drinking songs brought to life by wine, beer and mead. At that time no one thought of writing them down; only a few texts, much changed through the generations, have been preserved.

Hussite songs

The swelling wave of the Hussite movement brought to the fore religious folk songs, created to fulfil the function of the banner and the sword. *Ktož sú boží bojovníci* (Ye Warriors of God), and *Povstaň, povstaň veliké město pražské* (Rise Up Great City of Prague) belong to the most advanced music of the Reformation. Seventy-seven such songs, fiery and humorous, are preserved in the Jistebnice Hymnal dating from the

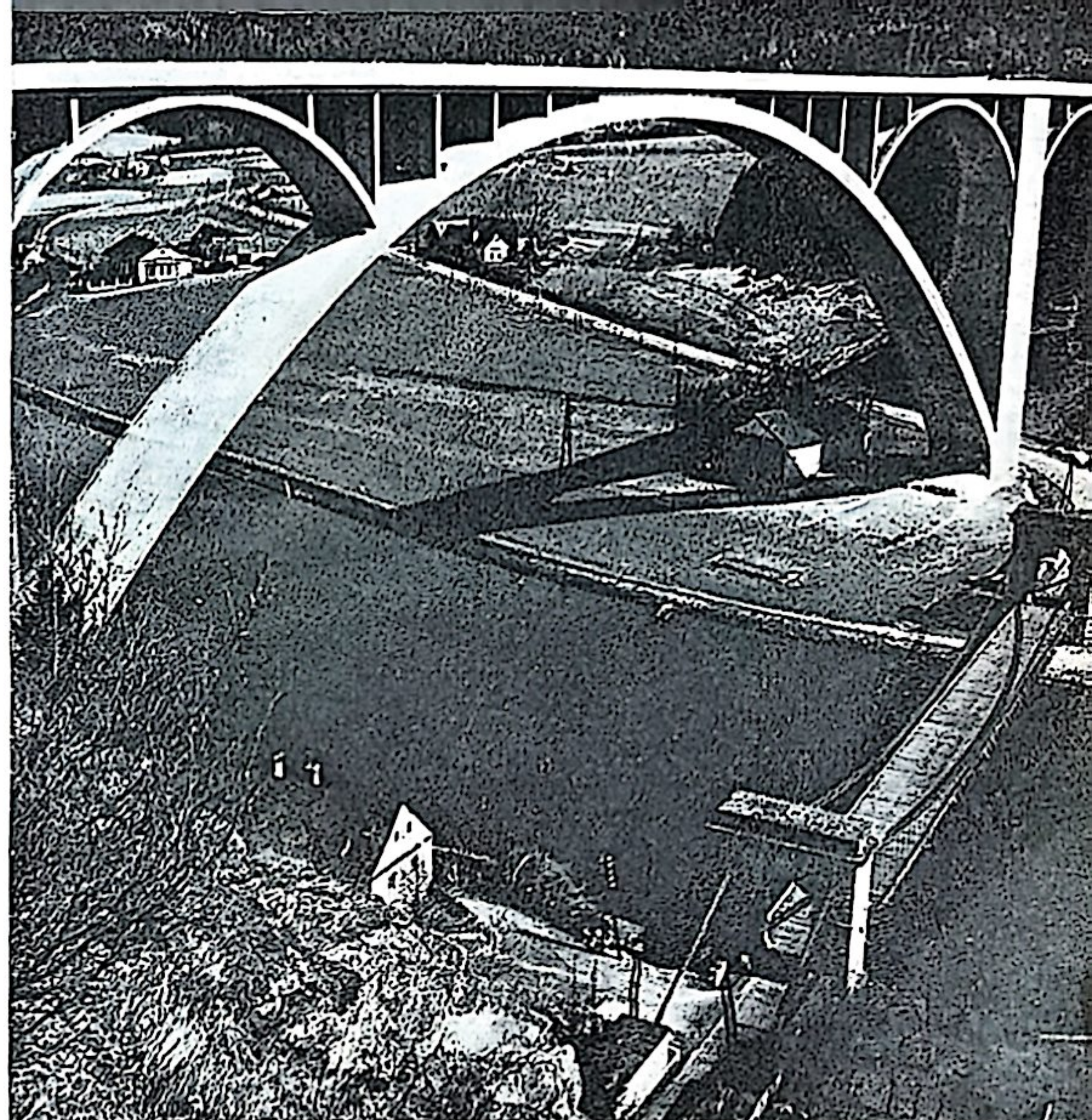
first half of the 15th century. Among the composers is the name of Jan Hus.

15th–17th centuries

Music is a power, as far as the emotions are concerned, but historically it is sometimes a blind instrument. Its significance in the spiritual struggle is often determined by the literary text. Consequently, in the period between the Hussite revolution and the, for Czechs, tragic beginning of the 17th century, it took part on both sides of the conflict between Catholicism and the Reformation. It rings as ardently in Catholic cathedrals as in the literary brotherhoods of the Protestant churches. Among Czech composers for the organ – in which the 16th century was particularly outstanding – the names of Jiří and Václav Rychnovský and Jan Trojan Turnovský are still remembered today. An orchestra and choir originated in the court of Rudolf II, whose interest in art we have already noted. The nobles could not lag behind the emperor, and they too established orchestras. Those of the Rožmberks were excellent, as was that of Kryštof Harant of Polžice, himself a composer and writer. The burghers followed suit by founding the society *Collegium musicum*. Rudolf II did not set a bad example for his subjects, and as we see, it was followed with pleasure. There was little warfare at this time, a fact which histories and chronicles note with approval.

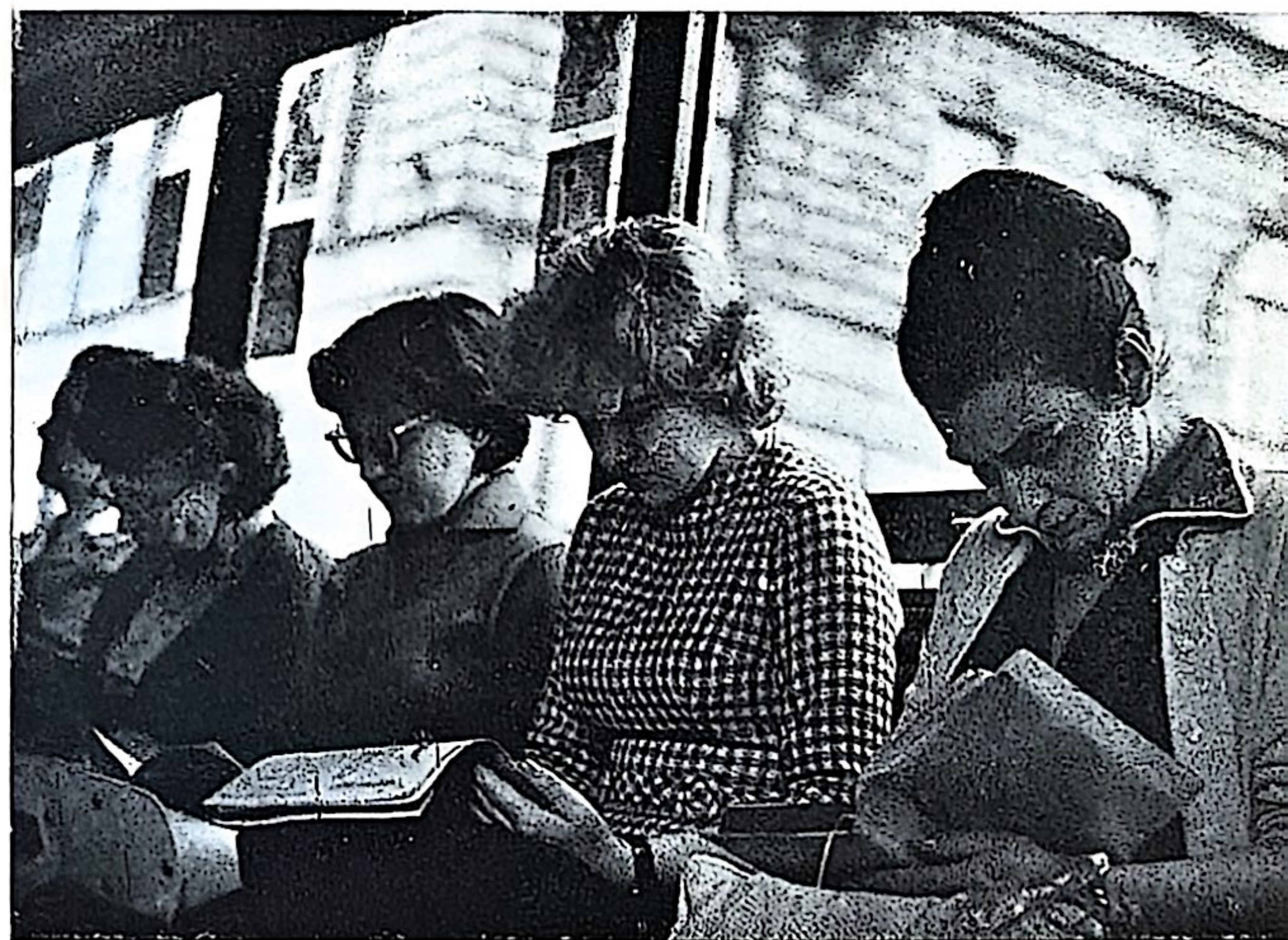
1620 again

The tragic year of 1620 rudely interrupted the sound of this music. After their victory over the Czech Estates, the Hapsburgs executed the Czech nobility or drove them into exile and confiscated their property. The Thirty Years' War laid waste the land. At first there



Man and Nature

Avid readers

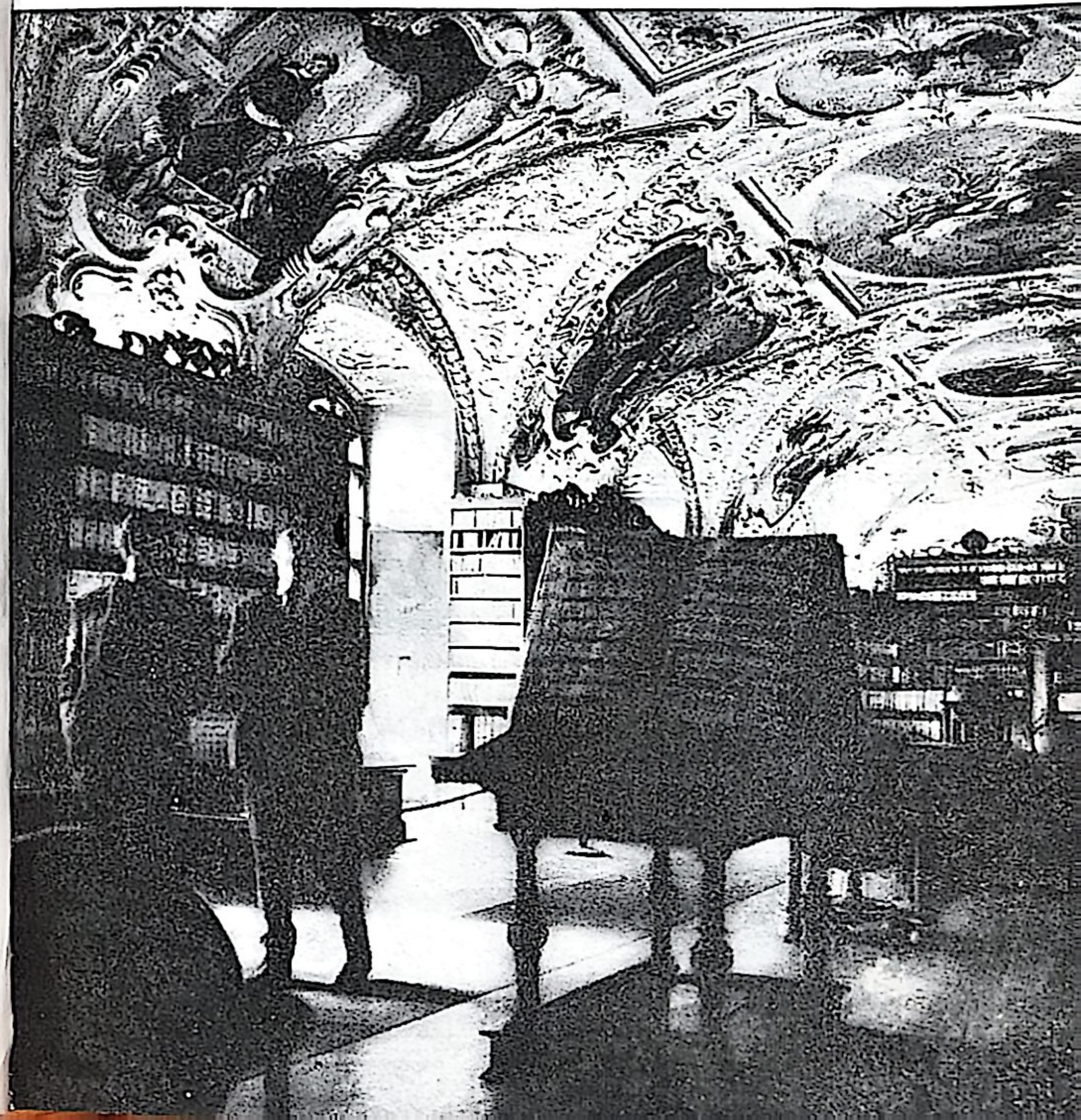




Young audiences listen to contemporary poetry in the Viola café

The Museum of Czech Literature

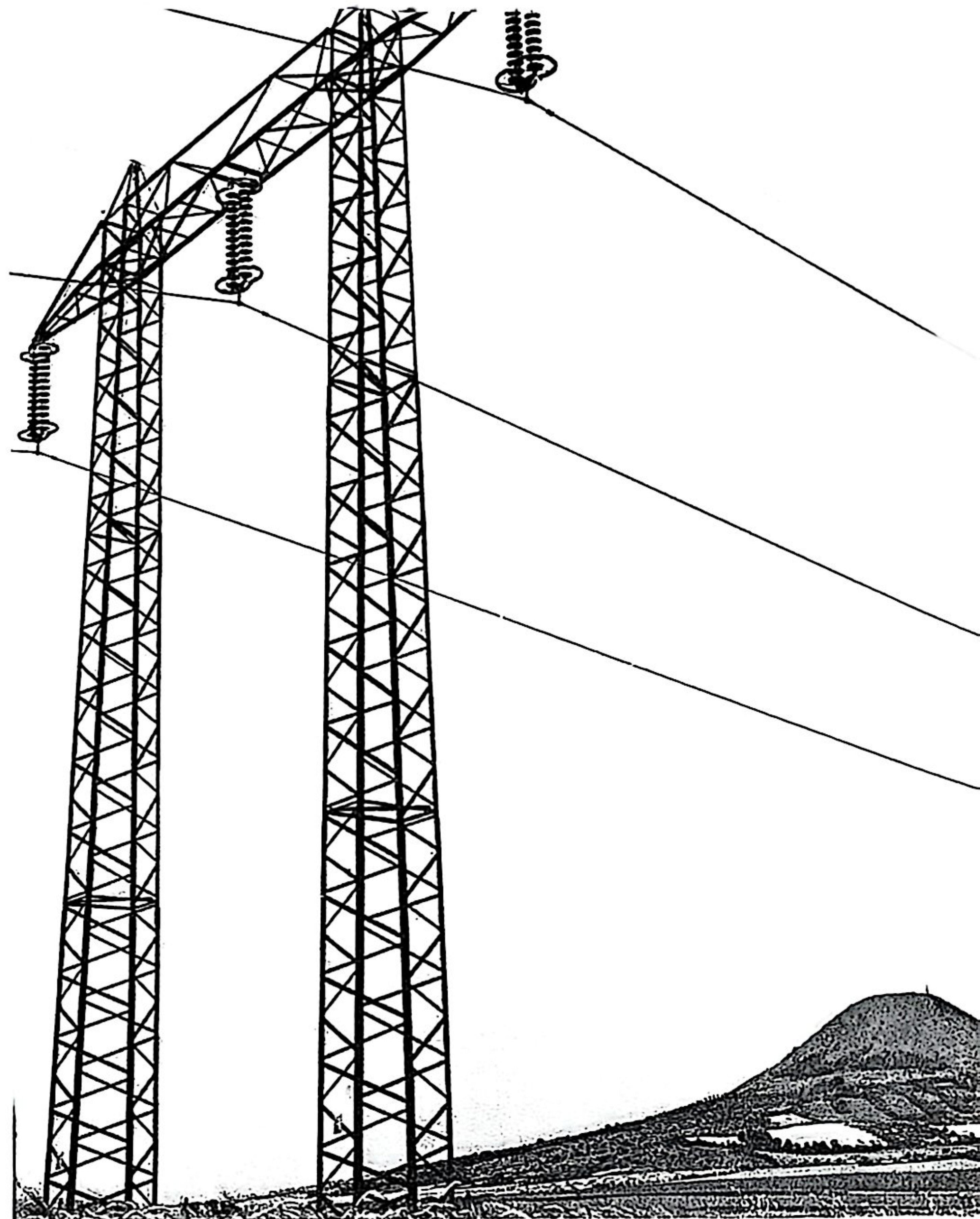
Authors and journalists talk with their readers





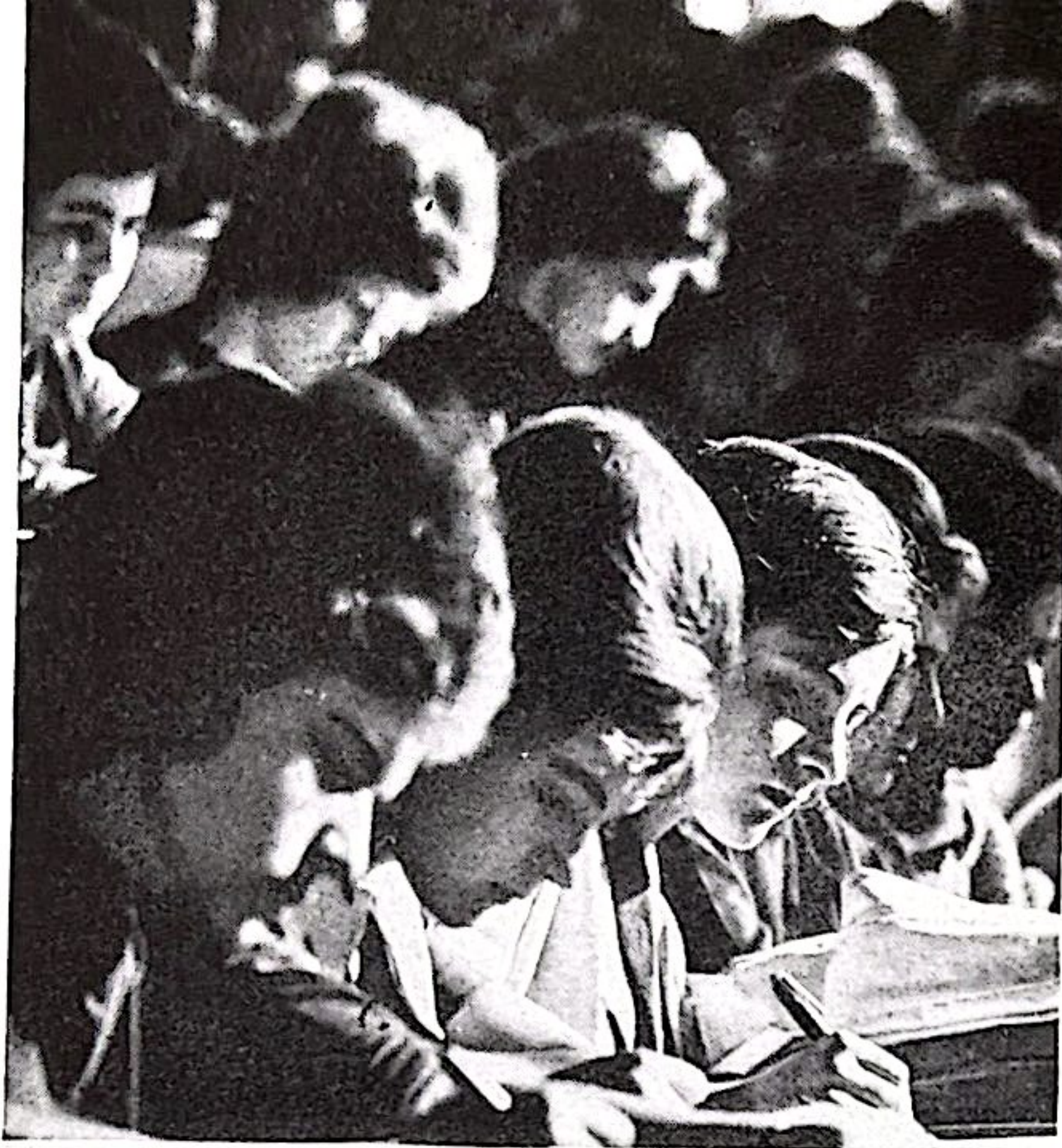
A bookshop

T. Heyerdahl (Norway) autographing copies of his books for his Prague readers



Central Bohemian landscape



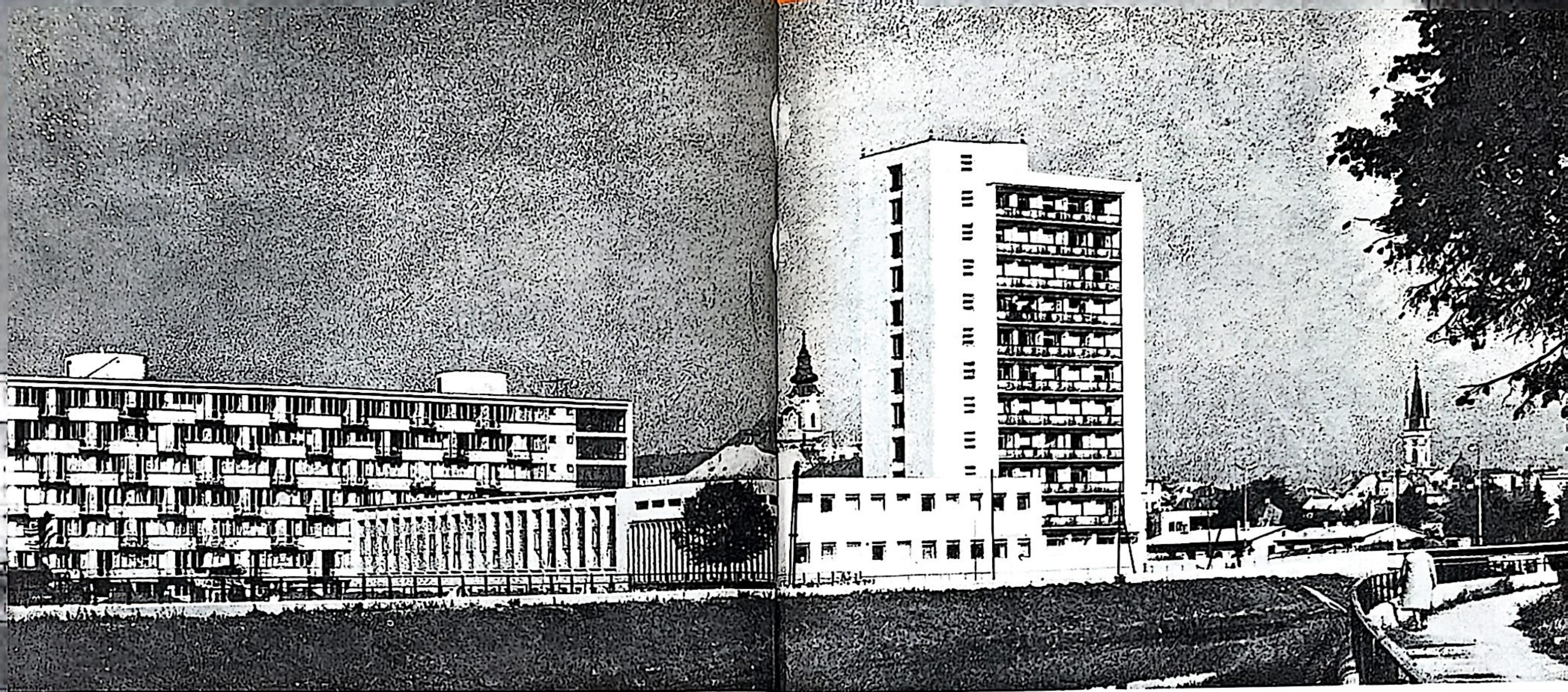


University students

Evening school



Graduation ceremony in the Hall of Charles University



Nitra - the College of Agriculture with hostels
(architects: V. Dedeček, R. Miňovský, F. Seják,
M. Šavlík)



Příbram - amateur sculptors at a miners' club



Jihlava - main hall of the cultural centre
(architect: V. Machonin)



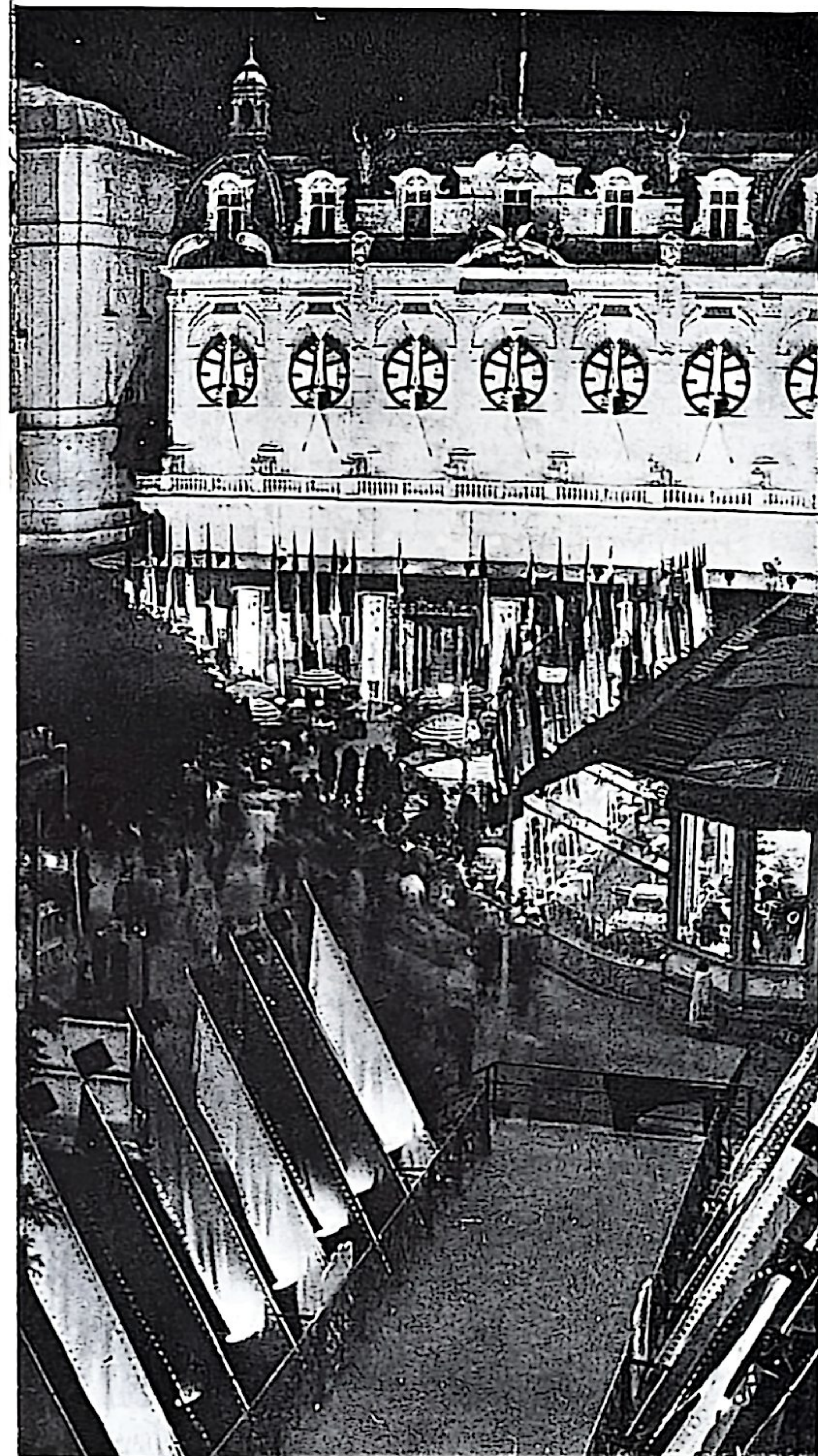
Wooden church and gravestone in east Slovakia



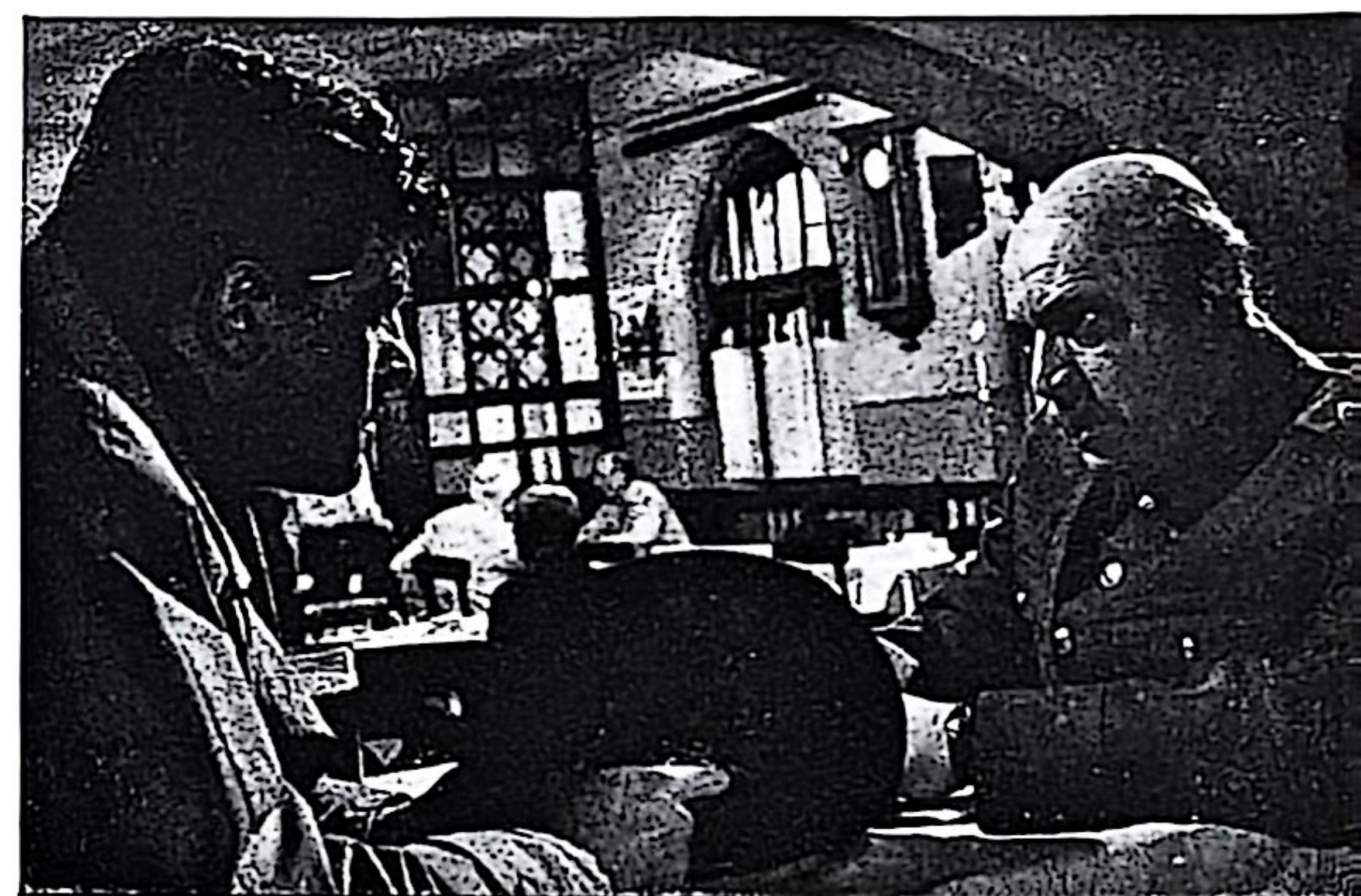
Folk-musicians at a festival in Východná

**About Something Else – directed by J. Chytilová
(Grand Prix at the Mannheim IFF 1963)**

Karlovy Vary during the International Film Festival



**Petr and Pavla – directed by M. Forman
(Grand Prix, Locarno, 1964)**



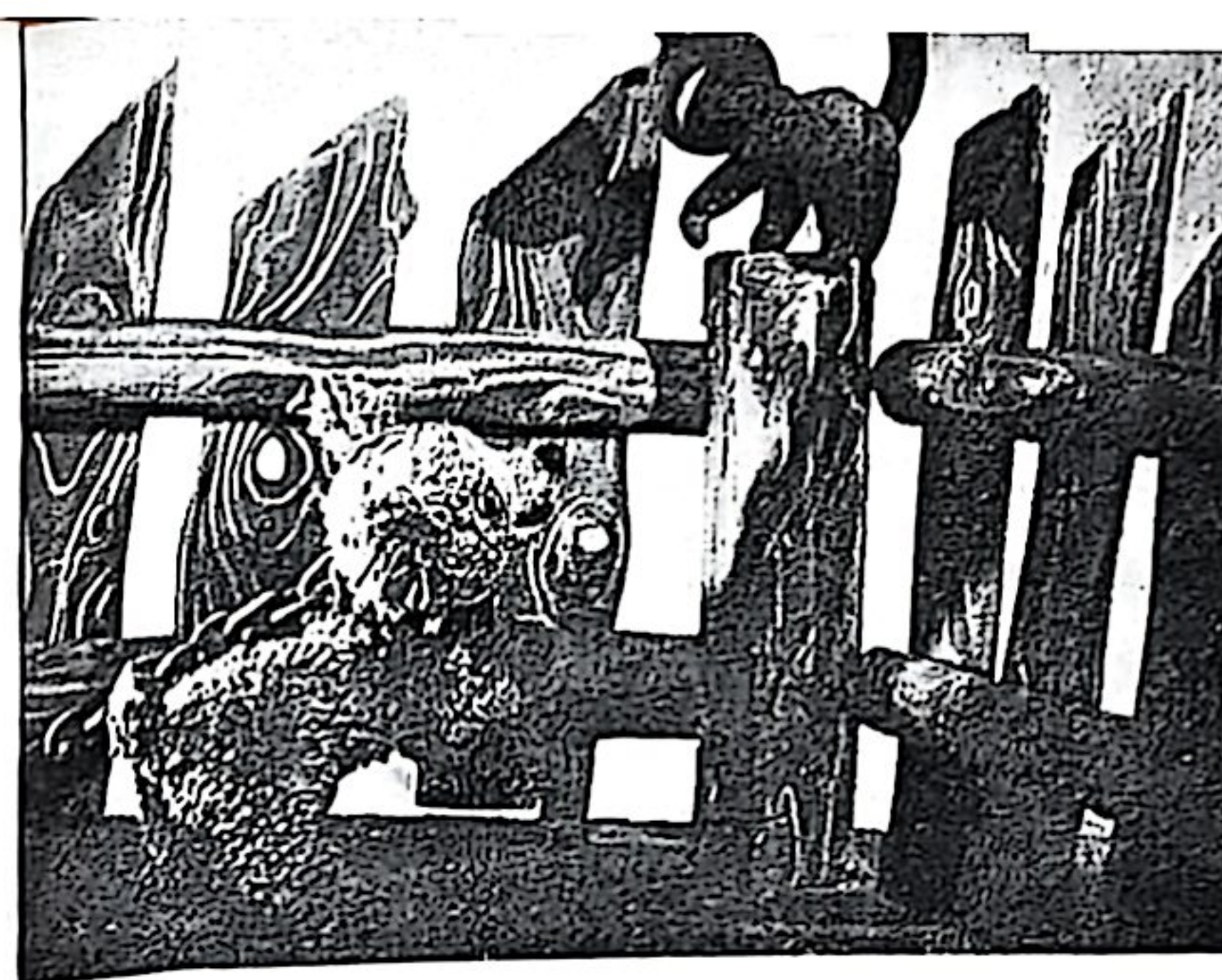
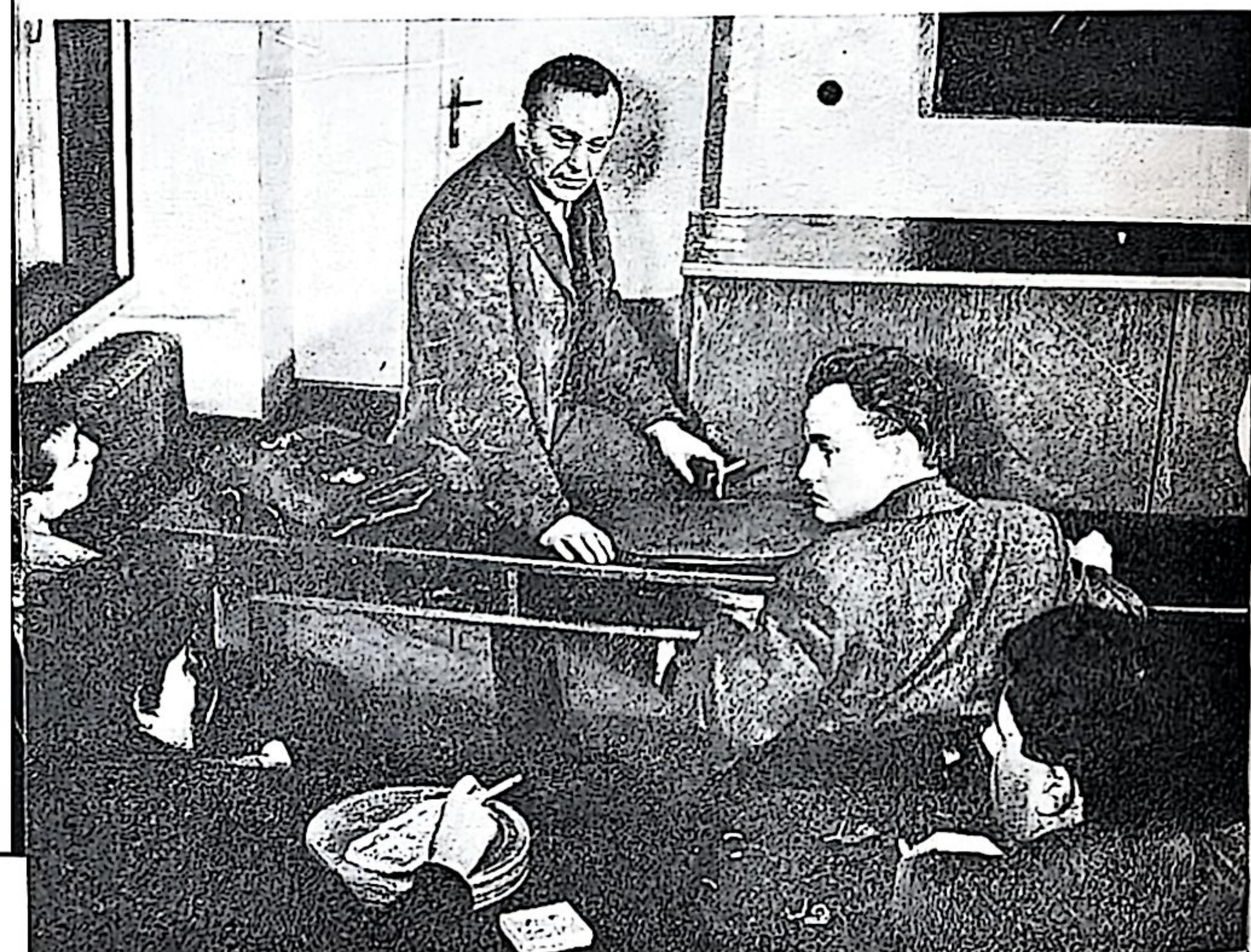
**Engelchen Means Death – directed by V. Kadar
and E. Klos (First Gold Prize, Moscow 1963)**





Sun in the Net – directed by Š. Uher

K. Höger of the National Theatre with his pupils
at the Film Academy



Shots from puppet films:
H. Týrlová – Nine
Chickens

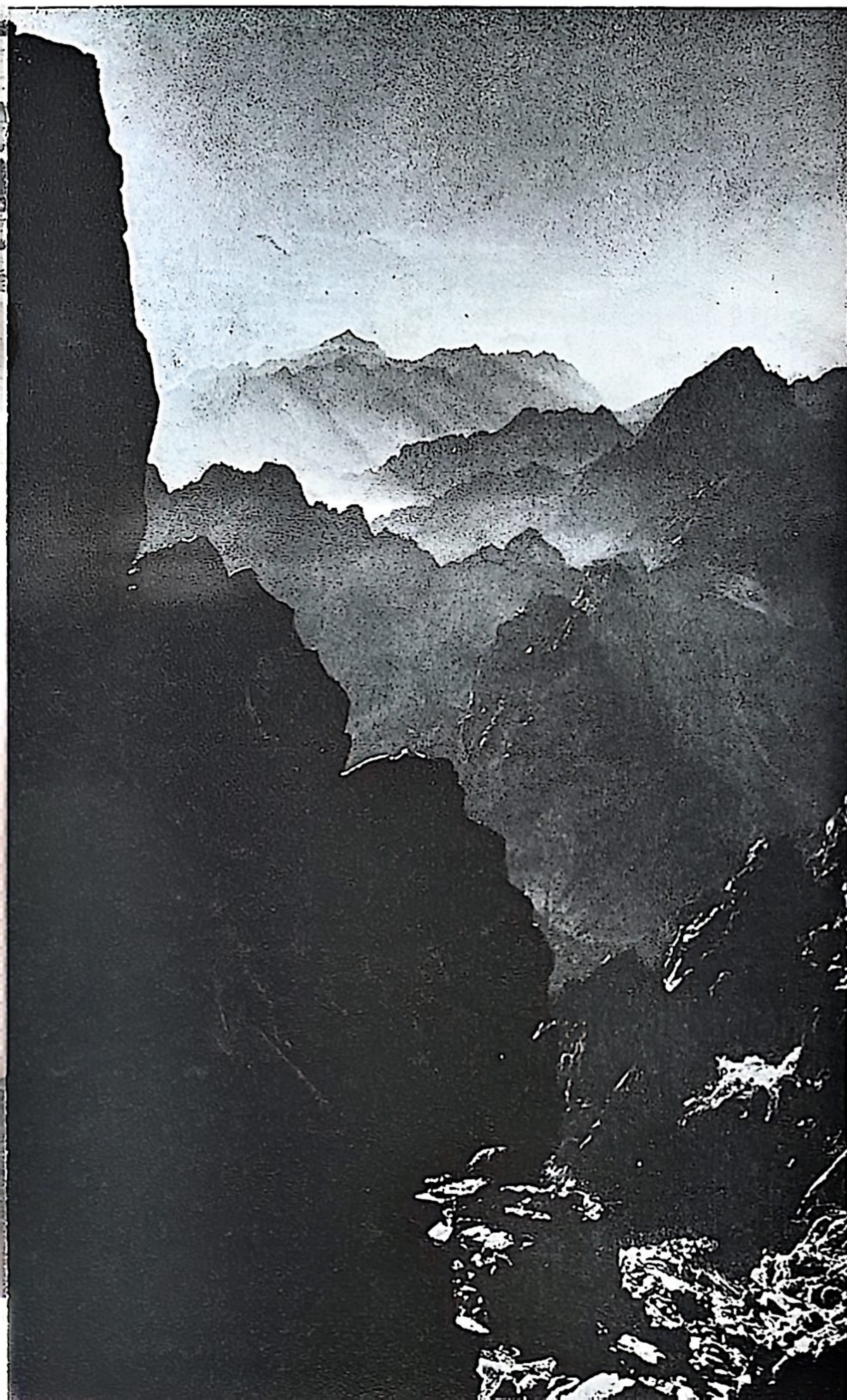
J. Trnka –
Old Czech Legends



Shot from J. Brdečka's
Gallina Vogelbirdae (Gold
Medal at San Sebastian,
1964)



The High Tatra Mountains – Slovakia



was only the roll of drums; later, in the second half of the 17th century music and song could be heard again, but with what a difference! The Counter-Reformation was well aware of the musical inclination of the people, and therefore it had to put all its ideas and all its hatred not only into words but into song. It took the melodies of the old songs but twisted their texts for the re-education of an heretical people. Spiritual songs with new content were produced as if in a factory; one hymn book followed another.

At the time Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederick Handel were composing their works, the Czech leader of the court orchestra of the Elector of Mannheim, Jan Václav Stamiec, was another star in the musical heavens. Mozart and Burney were enthusiastic. Franz Schubert later wrote of the orchestra: "... Its *forte* is thunder, its *crescendo* a cataract, its *diminuendo* sounds like a crystal stream tinkling into the distance, its *piano* like a spring breeze..." The 18th century produced a series of Czech composers who became famous in the European musical world: Černohorský, Zelenka, Bixi, Voříšek, Tomášek, Ryba.

Emigrant musicians

The intellectual and material conditions of the time in the Czech lands and in Slovakia offered few opportunities for musicians of talent. They had to go abroad to find openings. Among them was the composer of the first musical melodrama, Jiří Benda; the darling of Italy and an example to the young Mozart, Josef Mysliveček; Antonín Rejcha, professor of composition at the Paris Conservatoire and teacher of Berlioz, Liszt, Franck and Gounod; Leopold Koželuh, who lived in Vienna; František Mareš, who made Russia his home.

Josef Slavík could compete with Paganini; Dusík gained fame as a pianist, J. V. Sticho-Punto as a horn-player. Hundreds of Czech musicians were members of bands and orchestras throughout Europe. They went out into the world for bread and fame – but more for the former than for the latter.

The Conservatory

The Prague Conservatory was founded at the beginning of the 19th century (1811), and became the main centre for the cultivation of the musical tradition. Bohemia and Prague attracted famous musical names. Beethoven visited here, as did Weber and Gluck. Mozart passed one of the most peaceful periods of his life in Prague; here he completed his *Don Giovanni*, and conducted its first performance. Wagner conducted here and wrote his *Tannhäuser*. Berlioz performed in Prague, and so did Liszt, who was a close friend of Smetana. Mariánské Lázně preserves the evidence of Chopin's stay there in a special museum. One could continue with this gratifying history, but it would be better still to visit personally the many places filled with memories of the life and the visits of great artists, and feel the quiet excitement that intimate contact with a beloved personality brings.

19th and 20th centuries

Music played an important role in the national awakening, which during the first decades of the 20th century brought the culture of the Czech and Slovaks up to world standard. There is a whole stream of names which cannot be recorded without fear of overlooking or underestimating one.

Of those no longer living, let us name Smetana, Dvořák, Foerster, Janáček, Martinů, Novák, Suk, Moyzes,

Fibich, Nedbal, Ostrčil, Blodek, Jeremiáš, Nejedlý, Ježek, Schulhoff, Kaprálová... Among performing musicians at least Ševčík, Ondříček, Kubelík, and the conductors Talich and Chalabala, are worthy of mention.

Contemporaries

Today's generation of composers includes many Slovak names, and displays a wide range of qualities. Foremost among them are Hába, Dobiáš, Sommer, Krejčí, Cikker, Suchoň, Kardoš, Sokol, Trojan, Kalaš, Havelka, Pauer, Hlobil, Kubín. The most prominent conductors are Ančerl, Šejna, Smetáček, Krombholc, Slovák, Rajtěr, Neumann, Košler, Waldhans, Trhlík, Klíma, Hrnčír, Jílek, Turnovský, Fischer...*) The names of at least two choirmasters, Stupka and Veselka, must be added. There are outstanding violinists (Suk, Jásek, Plocek), pianists (Švihlíková, Pokorná, Páleníček, Holeček, Panenka, Knor, Maxián, Rauch), cellists (Sádlo, Večtomov) and other instrumentalists. Of concert singers, Věra Soukupová, who has had considerable success abroad, should be mentioned. Many soloists have travelled the world as members of chamber music ensembles, the Czech Trio, for example, and the many quartets which are following in the footsteps of the Czech Quartet: the Smetana, Dvořák, Vlach, Janáček and Novák quartets. Also well-known abroad are the Czech Nonet and the Pro Arte Antiqua ensembles.

*) This list is far from complete; a full catalogue would be out of place in a booklet of this type. Only a few names have been included which may be known to music-lovers abroad, in an effort to evoke a general picture of generations and periods. This applies to all lists of names given in this publication.

Orchestras

Many orchestras have been formed since 1945; today there are 27 in Czechoslovakia. Some of them are located in the smaller cities of the Republic and sponsor educational concerts for young people. These offer many opportunities for young musicians, graduates of the three university-level academies and eight conservatories. The orchestras are exacting in their standards and their level is high. Among the best are the Czech, Slovak and Brno philharmonic orchestras, the Czechoslovak Radio Orchestra, the Prague City Orchestra. The two orchestras without conductors are also well known.

Song

Moravians – although not they alone – are outstanding in group singing. Among the best choirs are the Moravian Teachers', the Czech Choir, the Moravian, the Typographical Workers'; the Prague and Moravian Women Teachers' choirs also give outstanding performances.

Folk songs and dances are performed by both professional and amateur groups – the State Song and Dance Ensemble, the Slovak Folk Art Group (SLUK), the Lúčnica, and other, especially student, ensembles. The Vít Nejedlý Army Ensemble, and other professional groups belong in this category. They frequently tour Europe and other parts of the world.

Jazz and Popular Music

Both jazz and dance music have a stable following in this country. It is interesting to note that left-wing culture in Czechoslovakia in the twenties and thirties

was closely linked with jazz, usually in connection with the theatre. The best known prewar jazz composer was Jaroslav Ježek, who established the tradition of political jazz songs with E. F. Burian in the D 34 Theatre, and in the Liberated Theatre of Voskovec and Werich. Today a similar marriage between modern music and theatre has come into being under quite different conditions. The poetry and music of the younger generation is centred in dozens of small theatres, most of them short-lived, but which provide an outlet for new talent and the soil from which many performers develop. Those which have achieved a permanent place and a professional level are the Semafor, with composer Šlitř, singer-poet Suchý, and vocalist Hana Hegerová; the Rokoko, with singers Pilarová and Matuška; Evening Brno, with Černík, Pantůček and Fuchs. Orchestras led by Vlach, Bezubka, Krautgartner, Brom, Havlík, with singers like Průchová and Gott, have gained popularity abroad... it is easier to name them than to decide which to leave out.

This does not exhaust Czechoslovak music by any means. We still produce tunes like the *Gladiators' March*, *Marinarella*, *The Gypsy-Girl*, *Roll Out the Barrel*, numerous compositions by folk bands, polkas (a dance of Czech origin), and other types of light music, which have become popular abroad and at home without anyone ever bothering to think twice about the nationality of the author.

Musical life

Concert life continues the year round, even in the smaller cities. The "Prague Spring" festival is an event which draws visitors every year from all over the world. Prague in May and June is in full bloom and at its

most beautiful. Outstanding orchestras and soloists from many countries are heard in its concert halls, gardens, at the Bertramka villa where Mozart stayed, among the statues, pools, bushes and flowers. Some combine their musical visit with a cure at one of Czechoslovakia's spas. In addition to the international music festival there is a preview of new Czechoslovak music each year, and a festival of orchestras.

From this very rough and incomplete outline of the history and the present status of Czechoslovak music, it is clear that music is an integral part of life here, and a typical form of expression for Czechoslovakia. It mirrors the liveliness of our minds and hearts under what sometimes seems to be a cool and unapproachable exterior. This strong feeling for music, which is the most international of languages, reveals a sincere desire and readiness for close relations with other peoples and nations. Hearing the voice of music so strongly, we are tuned to hear the voice of humanity, no matter where it comes from.

Literature

Structural and emotional values are to be found in architecture, art and music, but through the philosophical values of literature one can best gain an insight into the historical growth of a nation's deeper perceptions. For this purpose it is best to visit the Museum of Czech Literature in Prague, or the National Museum in Bratislava and Martin.

The Museum of Czech Literature

Looking up at Prague Castle from the quay along the Vltava, one can see between it and Petřín Park the former Strahov Monastery. It stands on the edge of a gulley

overgrown with pear and apple trees, and offers visitors one of the most beautiful views of Prague. Since 1953 the building has been used as a museum of Czech literature, where manuscripts and documents from the earliest times down to today are collected and studied. This activity is carried on in collaboration with other scientific institutes and university departments. Here, as in the Slovak museums which have been mentioned, one can obtain a complete survey of the development of national literature in a very accessible form. Its work is, of course, supplemented by other specialised institutions. Let us take a walk through it together, as the inexperienced visitor is likely to lose himself amidst this wealth of material.

In the quiet of the cloister halls one picture follows another; the documents in the show cases and glimpses through the windows of the impressive mass of Prague Castle, and the city descending to the Vltava. Strangely enough, this varied succession of pictures is not disturbing: on the contrary, after a while they merge to become a kind of motion picture, far removed from the yellowed melancholy of parchment scrolls. The spiritual history of the people of inland Europe takes three-dimensional shape before our eyes.

The documents are instructive. The centuries have not deprived them of many of their truths, and have not protected the individual from history. Historical truth sits here like a stern arbiter, judging again and again those who have already been judged and, with special satisfaction, their judges. The tragic is sometimes confirmed as tragic, but sometimes it becomes the ridiculous. The literary monuments bear the traces of their authors. The cold language of facts and laws in scientific writings is intertwined here with the passion and fragile beauty of poetry. Truth and beauty have no regard for time;

they echo again in us and enable us to understand ourselves better.

The oldest documents

The oldest literary treasures are written in Old Slavonic and Latin. Their origin is directly connected with the advent of Christianity in the ninth century. Political forces and interests determined the competition between Greek-Slav influences introduced by the mission of the brothers Cyril and Methodius from Salonica in 863, representing the Eastern Church and its literature, and the Roman-German influence. Both forms of worship and both cultures exercised their influence on the Slav pagans for more than two hundred years. Worship of the Sun God and his everlasting cycle, belief in the life-giving force of the earth, was erased from the Slav agricultural communities, often by very non-spiritual and cruel methods. Pagan pilgrimages and festivals, burying of the dead in fields and sacred groves, the evocation of the souls of the dead at crossroads – all this came to an end.

Literature falls far short of presenting the whole of Slav accomplishment. The people understood Old Slavonic as it was spoken, but they did not understand Latin at all. Great Moravian rulers favoured the liturgy in the Slavonic language, but the overthrow of their empire by the Hungarians in 906 brought new influences. The centre of the west Slavs shifted to Prague, and here the liturgy developed chiefly in Latin and German. While there were Slav cloisters, which had a strong cultural influence – the Sázava Cloister (which at one time housed the Rheims Evangelistary on which French kings took the coronation oath down to the 19th century), or the Emauz Monastery in Prague, destroyed by American bombers in 1945 – they were exceptions.

Literature was limited to a small circle of scholars who were able to write. The Czech language was spoken by a majority of people between the ninth and 13th centuries, but literary activity did not begin until the end of this period. Czech was a written language only in the law courts because people who knew no other language than their own had to be carefully investigated, for they were permanently and with justice suspected of not loving their lords. The efforts of educated Czechs to create their own literature, based on the Old Slav and Latin literary tradition, were nonetheless intensified.

Cosmas

Even in these circles, however, a Czech national consciousness came into being sooner than the ability to express it in the Czech language. Evidence is the Czech Chronicle, written by the nobleman and dean of the Prague Chapter, Cosmas, in the twelfth century in Latin. Its author arouses admiration today for his erudition, acquired by study and travel through Europe. He was a critical soul, a lover of poetry and humour, who set an example by the care with which he distinguished between stories handed down by word of mouth and historical truth.

The birth of a national literature

The first writings in the Czech language were translations and legends. The Czech chronicle known as Dalimil's, written in a strongly patriotic spirit, dates from the beginning of the 14th century. It is interesting that while authors writing in Latin concerned themselves with events and figures in Czech national history, those writing in Czech often turned for their subject matter

beyond the boundaries of the country, to far-off lands in which interest had been aroused by the Crusades. So, for the first time, the heroes of Greek and Roman history, including Helen of Troy and Alexander of Macedonia, became known on Czech soil. In general, however, people of that time were not as concerned with the language of a literary work or the nationality of its author as they are today. Czech and Slovak writing developed completely outside the narrow stream of literary activity, and in those days one jester-minstrel presented in his lifetime more Czech texts than the entire output of Latin, German and Czech literary men in a decade.

The thirteenth and, particularly, the fourteenth century can be regarded as periods of the full development of Czech literature, which was able to compete with, and to an increasing degree equal, in specialisation as well as in quantity, the literature written in Latin. The establishment of Prague University, the general advancement of learning, the founding of schools, the enrichment of the Czech language, the spreading of theatre and of knights' chronicles, all contributed to this. The fourteenth century marked the advent of the first Czech prose classic by Tomáš of Štítný.

In the fifteenth century this tendency was underlined by the strong Reformation movement, which sought to establish alliances within the country between the lesser nobles, the burghers, and the people, and to unify them through works written in the Czech language. The growth of Czech literature is thereby linked with the origins of the Hussite movement.

The Hussite Movement

The Hussite movement is usually depicted in its later phases, the people's uprising and the military victories of Jan Žižka and Prokop Holý. At the beginning, however, it was the intellectual movement of modern Europe. The Rector of Prague University, Master Jan Hus, and the whole Czech university community were in close contact with their colleagues at Paris and Oxford universities. Although the unity of this stream of thought is not of first importance, and indeed it was marked by quite conflicting tendencies, it is gratifying even today to think of the alliance and often warm friendship among many European scholars, who venerated and supported each other.

An idea of the relationships existing at the time may be gained from the way the humanist Poggio Bracciolini of Florence, an opponent of the Hussite Movement, wrote of the death of the Master of Prague University and Hus's friend, Jerome of Prague, with a generosity still unusual among men of opposing views: "With a clear brow and cheerful visage he went to his death, not fearing fire, nor torture, nor to perish. No Stoic ever went to death with mind so steadfast and heart so brave. Believe me, that man died like a true philosopher."

Not only in the political and ideological fields has the Hussite period exerted a lasting influence on the Czech and Slovak nations. In literature, too, it was a time of rapid growth, when the national element became predominant. A tremendous reinforcement of the spirit of truth, courage and inner conviction swept through all levels of Czech society, creating connections which led to a marked popularisation of literature and to the development of poetry, song, satire and parody, to the

spreading of numerous philosophical writings and tracts. Czech found its way into religious services, and its grammar and spelling were modernised. Many lasting cultural values found roots among the broad masses of the common people.

The defeat of the Hussites channelled literature chiefly in the directions of clerical polemics and entertainment. A productive literary figure of the period was the Evangelist thinker Petr Chelčický. Close links grew up between Czechs and Slovaks, and Czech became the written language of Slovakia for almost five centuries. The people of Slovakia spoke their own language, but it was not until the 19th century (1843) that thanks to Ludovít Štúr, after resisting centuries of Hungarian influence, it became a literary tongue. Today it is a modern and musical language.

The Golden Age

The democratisation of learning and of literary expression continued down to the 17th century. Literature drew on two strong spiritual trends—European humanism and the Evangelical *Unitas Fratrum*—which gradually, through the exchange of polemics, came to follow a common progressive ideal, the brotherhood of nations, individual freedom, social justice. Literary works took many different forms, serving a wide range of specialised fields, and writers were typically international in their outlook. Prose had the greatest following. The writer acquired a new and higher social responsibility. The stream of works (some still in Latin) made the reign of Rudolf II (the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries) the Golden Age of Czech literature. The period saw the appearance of the *Kralice Bible*, which for a long time set the literary standard in Bohemia and Moravia and Slovakia.

After the White Mountain defeat, there was a sharp reverse in literature as in all cultural life, which lasted for 150 years. Scholars were persecuted and many leading personalities left the country. Only the officially approved writings remained. The reader was materially and spiritually oppressed by sterile and reactionary literature. Only folk-art remained healthy, but limited in content and style. The situation was more favourable in Slovakia. The Counter-Reformation was not as energetically enforced there, and Slovakia was able to maintain the pre-White Mountain cultural tradition and continuity until the end of the 18th century.

Comenius

The greatest figure among those who went into exile was Jan Amos Comenius, the last bishop of the *Unitas Fratrum*. Combining the religious and humanist traditions, he was the founder of modern educational theory and of the Pansophic system, an outstanding theologian and philosopher. With unbroken spirit, tragically burdened by personal disaster and that of his nation, he wrote his tremendous work, which is notable for its scholarly erudition and literary beauty. *) In the museum in Uherský Brod in southern Moravia where Comenius was born, documents relating to his life and work have been preserved. Better than the many words about Comenius, perhaps these from his own *Panergesie*, written 350 years ago, speak for him most clearly; "In truth Europe is separated from Asia, Asia from Africa, Africa from America and between empires and lands lie mountains and valleys, rivers and fields. One Earth, however, bears and nurtures us

*) The World Council of Peace and UNESCO observed the 300th anniversary of the first publication of Comenius's collected works, *Opera Didactica Omnia*, as a world cultural event in 1957.

all, the same air quickens and embraces us, the same heavens rise above us, the same sun lights us all in our turn; we all live in one common habitation, one breath of life inspires us all. We are all citizens of one world – what then hinders us from gathering in one community, under the selfsame laws? People were formerly scattered over the earth; now they gather together again in larger and larger wholes... What then hinders us from hoping that we will all one day be one well-ordered unity, permanently joined by the bonds of science, laws and religion? For one and the same thing is natural to all people; one system of the senses, reason, will, and all vital forces.”

The National Awakening

The revival of a national literature began in the seventies of the 18th century with the awakening of national life and culture as a whole. This was part of the movement which, gradually gripping all Europe, reached its high point in the French Revolution. A national consciousness in literature first made itself felt in the fields of science, philology and history, although the authors still wrote in Latin or German. Dobrovský, Jungmann, Procházka, Šafařík, Palacký, Purkyně, Presl – these are the great names in the revival of scholarship.

Soon drama and prose and the first works of poetry began to appear. The poets and writers of the first half of the 19th century, especially Kollár, Štúr, Holý, Čelakovský, Tyl, Mácha, Havlíček, Erben, Němcová, are among the greatest figures of Czechoslovak literature. They had to carry out tremendous pioneering work, because the national language had suffered greatly from having been the tongue of the lowest, most oppressed and most ignorant, who nonetheless preserved

it during the darkest days. An independent Slovak literature followed the creation of a Slovak literary language. In addition to Štúr, the great names were Hurban, Sládkovič, Chalúpka, Král, Botto.

The period from 1890 to the re-establishment of Czech and Slovak independence by the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 was one in which Czech and Slovak literature established their European significance. The advance of science, education, strong international ties in literature and art, a large number of translations and the enrichment of both national languages, the ideas of national and social liberation, all stimulated the development of talent in spite of the twists and turns in the development of art. The national life of Czechs and Slovaks underwent a marked revival in the sixties of the last century. There were many new works, campaigns and institutions like the Slovak *Matica*, the Sokol and the Arts Club. From these arose the classics of Czech and Slovak literature: Neruda, Čech, Vrchlický, Hálek, Sládek, Machar, Arbes, Vajanský, Dyk, Bezruč, Jirásek, Kukučín, Jesenský, Světlá. After the first world war these were joined by a younger generation, of whom some are still alive and writing today. Among well-known Prague poets and authors writing in German were Rilke, Kafka, Kisch, Weiskopf, and Fűrberg.

In the twenties, the stream of Czechoslovak literature branched out into different ideological courses. Socially conscious poets and writers came to the fore, many of them filled with enthusiasm for the October Revolution in Russia. Many of them were connected with avant-garde European trends which were searching for new forms of artistic expression for the new ideas. There were, of course, poets with other outlooks and opinions, too, but opposition to fascism was a unifying influence.

The twenties and thirties were unusually rich in literary talent. To name at least some of those who have crossed the frontiers of their country in translations or may have become known abroad in other ways: Neumann, Hašek, Olbracht, Majerová, Wolker, Jilemnický, Král, Seifert, Hora, Krasko, Nezval, Biebl, Konrád, Halas, Holan, Čapek, Vančura, Šrámek, Pujmanová, Novomeský, Nový, Glazarová. A generation of critics belongs here as well: Šalda, Václavek, Teige, Fučík, Matuška, and others.

1945 down to today

In the most recent period, beginning in 1945, several stages of literary development can be distinguished. The whole process may be described as a movement from often formal declarations of adherence to socialism, or from the naive revolutionary faith of the first years, to a deeper and less simplified understanding of contemporary Czechoslovak society and to a new view of the writer's responsibilities.

Literature is represented today by dozens of active figures, with a quite independent position occupied by the Slovaks. A few of the most prominent names, some of which are already known abroad: Hrubín, Drda, Otčenášek, Mináč, Tatarka, Mňačko, Kostra, Žáry, Mikolášek, Taufer, Čivrný, Ptáčník, Šotola, Frýd... Many writers in Polish, Hungarian or Ukrainian should, of course, be included. Our greatest hope lies in the very numerous group of younger poets, highly educated and with a knowledge of world literature.

We can but regret that so many noteworthy works are locked up in two languages, spoken by about 14 million people. Czech and Slovak poetry, especially, has so much in it that is original, so much of life's powerful

forces and forms, but it remains hidden from the world, an inaccessible treasure. Only a small part of the literature – like Hašek's *Good Soldier Schweik*, Karel Čapek's stories and plays, Nezval's poetry, a few playwrights and other authors, have been translated. This is not entirely true of Russian; dozens of Czechoslovak works have found their way into the world through Soviet publishing houses.

Czechoslovak readers have a much greater opportunity to read the literatures of other countries in translation. The translators have acted as intermediaries for world poetry and prose – even in oriental languages. Since 1945, for example, about 300 titles of Italian works have been translated and published, and about 250 French titles. Unfortunately, only about twenty works have travelled in the opposite direction. It is, of course, impossible to make a mechanical comparison, but these figures do indicate a certain lack of balance, and a lack of information about this very individual Central European literature in French, English, Spanish and Italian-speaking countries.

Publishing houses

There are about thirty central and regional publishing houses – not including the universities – in Czechoslovakia. Most of them belong to the state, and are associated in the Czechoslovak Centre of Book Culture, which is very closely linked with the network of book distributors. Other publishing houses are owned by political parties, trade union and other organisations, the professional organisations of artists, the Academy of Sciences, and by churches. The state publishing houses are quite specialised: one deals in children's books, another in technical literature, still others in health, agricultural,

pedagogical, artistic and musical publications. The State Music Publishing House issues sheet music and gramophone records, and owns the plants manufacturing records.

Distribution of literature

People read a lot in Czechoslovakia. There are often early-morning queues at bookshops on the days when especially interesting new books are expected. People read in trains, in trams, in coffee shops, in every free moment. The Friends of Poetry Club has 10,000 members; the Readers' Club and the "May" Edition have a quarter of a million members each. In the past seventeen years the poetry of Nezval has been published in a total of 800,000 copies, the Soviet poet Shchipachev in 350,000. An 80,000 edition of Rimbaud was sold out in a few days, as was one of Ovid. Members of the Readers' Club bought up a 100,000 edition of Graham Greene in a week. Taufer's expert translation of Mayakovsky's poetry for the Poetry Club was published in 250,000 copies. Even new works of Czechoslovak or foreign poetry are issued in editions of up to 25,000 copies. The interest in poetry is surprising, and it has helped make paper supplies problem No. 1 for the publishing industry.

Public control of book production and distribution has considerable advantages which greatly outweigh the disadvantages. One of the advantages is that trash can be eliminated, the reader can be educated, and the fact is recognised that a well-developed sense for the good and the new, for works with a serious purpose whatever the artistic means they employ, is not confined to a small group of intellectuals. Good work is being done by the State Publishing House of Children's Literature, as well

as by the best artists and writers who contribute to the making of school textbooks, and their efforts to form the taste of children from an early age has won praise abroad.

The eyes of hundreds of thousands of readers, bent over their books, carry away from the lines they read thoughts which, perhaps today, perhaps a hundred years ago, penetrated beneath the surface of life. People learn to know themselves and they are able to read the faces of others; they learn to understand. By looking into the pages of books, as individual readers, they take part in the great collective consideration of the ideas which the authors hold and which our age has expressed through them. Such a dialogue is the best way of preparing a man to be able to speak through his own acts when the time comes.

The theatre

Except for Christmas Eve, there is not an evening when the theatre is not playing. It belongs traditionally to the life of the people and has always played a vital part, social and political as well as cultural. No wonder that today Czechoslovakia has 70 professional theatres and more than 100 permanent drama, opera, operetta and ballet companies, with a total of 14,000 permanent employees.

The word "permanent" is emphasised to indicate that the former instability of theatre life no longer exists. Actors, and all who are employed in the theatre, receive regular monthly salaries and have a right to the same advantages as every other working person. The artist usually stays for several years, sometimes even decades, in the same theatre. It is for him like a home

port from which he can (according to his abilities or luck) find engagements with other companies, in the films or in T. V., make trips through the country, to schools and clubs, and perhaps abroad.

Some history

We would have to go far, back to the pagan ceremonies, festivals and processions of the old Slavs, if we wanted to trace the first evidence of the theatre to its source really conscientiously. The theatre, as we know from history, accompanied medieval Christian celebrations, either in their solemn aspect in the churches or in the form of secular caricatures and parodies on the streets, where students or wandering players performed for the enjoyment of the multitude. As we know from *The Quack*, and other similar plays, the students were not afraid to take liberties and to add very strong seasoning.

Czechoslovak theatre dates back to the seventies of the 18th century, to the beginnings of the national revival. This was only an episode, since neither the material nor the cultural conditions were yet ripe for a permanent Czech theatre. Still, these few decades produced the first plays, performances, authors and actors (Thám, Heimbacher, Šedivý, Štěpánek, Klicpera). In 1826 the first Czech opera, *The Tinker*, had its premiere. These were difficult years of pioneering work. Every step was beset with lack of means, ridicule, lack of faith, prejudice and pettiness. The travelling companies reached the widest audience and brought the light of new ideas to places which it otherwise could never have penetrated. This theatre was entirely popular in character. It was not created or presented for the rulers and nobles of courts and palaces. Its audiences were made up of the most ordinary people, many of whom could neither read nor write. Just for this reason, the antics of those

few "crazy players" remain a permanent positive contribution to Czechoslovak culture, and an important part of the country's political history. Listen to the Czechoslovak national anthem. Its first, Czech, stanzas, which sound like the song of a violin, are from Tyl's play *Fidlovačka* written in 1834. The second, Slovak, part, more temperamental, is the melody of a Slovak folk song; the new, political words of the revivalist text were composed by Slovak students and sung ten years later (1844).

The uninterrupted tradition of the Czech theatre, performed by travelling companies and later in special "stone" buildings, really begins in 1848. What hopes these wandering handfuls of enthusiasts brought, hungry and socially despised, in the period of the defeated revolution! Czech plays of that time were not composed at clean writing desks, but in players' wagons and on stony roads. In recognition of the great moral force of the Czech theatre, there arose a national desire for an appropriate and dignified building. It is worth remarking the way political, national and social aspirations were linked in the minds of the simple country people, workers and craftsmen, by the idea of building a cultural institution. The Prague National Theatre was built in the eighties of last century from voluntary contributions collected among people the majority of whom could never hope to be members of its audience. This feeling was so strong that it was possible to repeat the collection when the theatre was burned down just before its opening.

In the Czechoslovak theatre, as in cultural life as a whole, deep class and social differences and differences in world outlook began to appear in the twenties after independence had been won. And with the advance of European fascism the theatre turned to politics. To the

splendid era of progressive theatre belong the Liberated Theatre of Voskovec, Werich and Ježek, the D 34 of E. F. Burian, and directors like Honzl, Frejka, Stibor. Among writers and poets who cooperated were Nezval, Hoffmeister, Čapek, Langer. The amateur stage (F. Kubr) also played an important part in the progressive movement of the thirties. Of those mentioned above, Werich (in Prague) and Voskovec (in New York) are still active in the theatre, quite in the spirit of their earlier artistic crusade for humanity and against crime and stupidity. During the second world war most theatres were closed, the artists forced to work in factories, some were tortured in concentration camps, others emigrated.

The theatre today

In 1945 the theatres were nationalised. The network of permanent theatres is now more or less evenly distributed throughout the country, although Bohemia and Moravia still have a greater share than Slovakia. Economic security is given by state subsidies.

There is also a negative side, of course, and undoubtedly it has occurred to many readers in the course of scanning these lines. If the state pays the actors, supports and guides the theatre – is not the plus, represented by stable incomes and the ability of directors and repertory planners to ignore costs, bought at the price of artistic freedom? Does it not mean submitting to the dictates of bureaucrats? Indeed, such a danger did exist and still exists here and there today. But it is not the rule. People concerned with the theatre themselves decide on the repertoires, on the composition of ensembles, on the style of presentation. The emphasis is more and more on skilled direction, respect for artistic work and regard for the artist's individuality. Of the many facts

that can be brought forward to support this statement, we will cite only two, which have also been noted by the foreign press in articles on the contemporary Czechoslovak theatre (*New York Times*, *London Times*, *Die Welt*, and others, published during 1963).

Repertoire

Firstly, the repertoires are varied and they cannot be accused of one-sidedness produced by causes outside the theatre. Current programmes include Shakespeare, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, John Osborne, Sartre, Molière, Ostrovsky, Rozov, Chekhov, Watkyn, Goldoni, Kilty, Achard, Brecht, Dürrenmatt and Pagnol, Ionesco and Dobozy, Pogodin and Filippi, Albee, dramatisations of Tolstoy, Verne, Flaubert, Hašek, etc.

Creative work

The second point is more important, because it concerns the original work done by Czechoslovak playwrights, directors, actors and scene-designers. Since 1956, especially, there has been a visible improvement in the number and quality of plays. Many poets and writers have turned to drama and the general quickening of public life is felt in the theatrical world. The theatre has resumed its role as a searcher after truth and serves as a mirror in which society recognises itself. Works of many of our dramatists have been played on other European stages: Karvaš, Kohout, Stehlík, Blažek, Topol, Hrubín, Kundera, Drda. Werich continues as a creative actor-author. New names and new plays have appeared to account for a considerable part of the repertoire of the foremost Czechoslovak theatres. Set de-

signers Svoboda and Tröster have enjoyed great success (gold medals in Sao Paolo).

Little theatres

An interesting and encouraging chapter is the emergence of many small theatres run by young people. They have come forward with new ideas, new ways of putting them across, and have attracted a young audience. Their names – Semafor, On the Balustrades, Paravan, Rokoko, Evening Brno, Reduta, Viola, the Black Theatre, will not tell the reader much, although some of them are already known in Paris, Warsaw and Berlin. Good songs, contemporary poetry, the fresh music of young bands are heard on their stages; the youngest generation, which has not yet won its spurs in the field of poetry, music, dance or graphic art can find an outlet for its talents here. Beat groups can be heard here too, and a welcome feature is their participation in experiments in new forms of theatrical expression.

Opera

Opera, which has an honourable tradition in this country, moves more slowly and seriously. The National Theatres in Prague and in Bratislava are best known for their opera ensembles. They can rely on a musically mature public and a wealth of operatic works, making it possible to undertake special projects while continuing the regular programme. For example, in 1963, Czechoslovak theatres in Prague performed Janáček's operas in the space of a few weeks, all the works of Prokofiev, an uncut production of *Electra*, and other exacting productions. Czechoslovak soloists perform in Berlin, Vienna, and other cities. The Prague National Theatre company's performances at the Edinburgh Festival in 1964 met with an enthusiastic response.

Ballet

While some Czechs achieved world prominence as ballet composers (Pavel Vranický, the director of the Vienna court orchestra, Vojtěch Jirovec, orchestra conductor at the Viennese court, who composed many ballets for the famous dancers Marie Taglione and Fanny Elssler some 150 years ago), the modern ballet school dates only from the twenties of this century and its style is more that of the interpretative dance than of classical ballet. Classical ballet here follows the Russian and Soviet schools. Both styles have their composers and their audiences – the greatest following being in Brno. The classical preparation of ballet dancers enables them to interpret any style of dance, but the possibilities are not being fully exploited.

Mime

In a little square not far from the Vltava river, there is an old house ringed with galleries. This is the home of the Theatre on the Balustrades, where Ladislav Fialka produces his mime show. In an unspoken dialogue between the artist and the spectators, a discourse unfolds on the depth and the poetry of life. The magic of the white face, the delicate fingers, the flowing movements of the clown, remain with the spectator long after he has left the theatre. Fialka has fascinated many cities: among his greatest successes are the admiration and recognition won at the international mime festival in West Berlin and on tour in the United States.

A similar ensemble has been formed in Bratislava. It seems that the art of mime is experiencing a revival, thanks in part to the native land of the great Gaspard Debureau. It has much to say to tired eyes, dulled

by thousands of stereotyped objects, and to ears deafened by the millions of stereotyped words and sounds that flow from wireless sets, loudspeakers and speakers' platforms.

Indeed, the Czechoslovak theatre with its many facets is a moral force and authority, because it is not divorced from the striving for human freedom, for integrity and happiness.

Films

On hills near Prague and Bratislava stand the Barrandov and Koliba film studios and there is another studio in Gottwaldov. About forty feature films are produced annually. In recent years successes have been won at Cannes, Moscow, Venice and other festivals. Among directors who have gained international recognition are Vávra (Jan Hus), Krejčík (Higher Principle), Weiss (Romeo and Juliet and the Darkness), Jasný (That Cat), Kachyňa (Vexation), Brynych (Transport from Paradise), Vlácil (The Dove), Chytilová (About Something Else), Jireš (The Cry), Kadár and Klos (Engelchen Means Death). The directors-to-be will emerge from among graduates of the film school, whose dean is the well-known A. M. Brousil. The cameramen and script writers, too, have their share in the successes, which are especially welcome after some years of stagnation. In 1963, Czechoslovak films won 63 prizes and awards in international festivals and competitions.

One of the reasons for this success by the younger generation has been the high level of Czechoslovak short and documentary films. For film-makers this is very good training for observing life, for experimenting with various methods of expression, for broader artistic activity. For some years now, creators of short films

have been reaping awards and honours in Locarno, Oberhausen, and other competitions.

A field full of possibilities is that of cartoon and puppet films, where Jiří Trnka, Karel Zeman, Břetislav Pojar, Eduard Hoffman, Hermína Týrlová, are the best known producers.

Wireless and Television

Television has quickly won public favour. In Czechoslovakia there are now 1,800,000 T. V. sets, and the network of transmitters covers the entire country. TV is not yet fully equipped to do its job, but it is competing successfully with film, radio and theatre, and its good qualities decidedly outweigh its shortcomings. Above all, it has helped awaken interest in art and science in the remotest villages. Viewers can see the best plays, special productions, concerts, poetry programmes – and of the steadily increasing numbers of original television films, three have already won Golden Nymphs at Monte Carlo and two Silver Roses at Montreux.

There is a wireless set in every household, a broadcasting studio in every regional city. City wired radio networks have been set up. Czechoslovak Radio broadcasts in all important western languages, and in some oriental tongues as well. It has its own orchestras and choirs.

Modern cultural media have made even entertainment in the privacy of the home a public responsibility. They exercise an enormous influence, and therefore their standards and their aims must be measured by strict criteria. The accomplishments of technology have meaning only if accompanied by ethical and aesthetic values.

Art education Religion

The majority of young artists are graduates of one of the six art colleges (with departments of architecture, music, theatre, film, television, dance) or one of the 24 secondary vocational schools specialising in music and the visual arts. In 303 people's art schools throughout the Republic, 130,000 students are taking courses in art, literature, music, dance, drama and recitation. 4,000 educators and leading artists staff these schools, all paid by the state.

Art institutions

Artists are organised in professional unions*), while many belong to trade unions, too. The professional unions have funds to help their members and their own publishing houses. They lighten the hardships of the beginner or of the artist who is temporarily not producing, providing a number of generous stipends. The funds are administered by the members. The central government body for cultural activity is the Ministry of Education and Culture, which works closely with the local government authorities. The government administers artistic institutions and research institutes for theatre, stage design, and allied fields. In addition to managing the most important ensembles, the Ministry supervises the Folk Art Centre, the Centre of Applied Arts, and the enterprise which designs and installs all major displays and exhibitions.

*) The Union of Czechoslovak Writers, the Union of Slovak Writers;
The Union of Czechoslovak Architects, the Union of Slovak Architects;
The Union of Czechoslovak Theatre and Film Artists, the Union of Slovak Theatre and Film Artists;
The Union of Czechoslovak Composers and Performing Musicians;
The Union of Slovak Composers and Performing Musicians.

We have referred several times in this publication to the contribution of religion to cultural development, especially before the dawn of our modern age and the birth of science. For centuries religion was the chief ideological form in which political, class and national events found expression. The eastern and western forms of Christianity which struggled here at the beginning of our cultural history made use of their best arguments, values, and most capable cultural forces, and these have left their mark. They took over and refined many aspects, customs and habits of Slav paganism. The cloisters and religious schools were the propagators of literature and learning up to the fourteenth century, when Prague University was founded, signalling the end of this monopoly.

We have explained how important the Hussite movement was for the spread of culture, and how it influenced cultural events of the time and of subsequent centuries.

The conflict between Catholicism and the Reformation, the activity of the *Unitas Fratrum* and the Counter-Reformation, were primarily religious, theological in character, although far more than religion was involved. Catholicism, the ideology of the ruling Hapsburgs, often enforced by cruel intellectual, national and social oppression, met with continual opposition – in the Czech lands and in Slovakia. Consequently there was never religious unity in this country; numerous churches, sects and religious trends came into being and flourished. In the twenties atheism became widespread, especially in industrial and mining districts, under the influence of anarchism.

Today there are numerous churches in Czechoslovakia, with their cathedrals, and other places of worship. Religion has lost much of its hold, however, and it has become the private affair of the individual believer. Church organisations are active in the peace movement, however. Separation of church from state has not taken place. Children may have religious education in school at the request of their parents. The authorities are not interested in the religious beliefs of the individual – no one is ever asked what faith he professes.

Science

The framework within which people solve their political, economic and other problems is now provided by science. The whole history of modern times is marked by this shift from religion to science, and socialism, itself the product of scientific thought, gives full scope to this trend.

The beginnings of Czechoslovak science are to be found in the sixteenth century. Rudolf II, in addition to supporting alchemists, brought Tycho Brahé to Prague, and the city's name is also connected with Copernicus and Kepler. A number of distinguished foreigners were active here, for example, Bolzano, the French geologist Barrande, the Austrian geneticist Mendel. Goethe carried out geological research here. Scientists played an important part in the period of the national revival (see Literature). The Royal Czech Society of Sciences was founded in 1784, followed by the Czech Academy of Science and Art in 1890. Slovak science developed in the Slovak organisation *Matica*, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1963. Charles University was joined 250 years ago by the Prague Technical School, fore-runner of the Czech Technical University.

Czechoslovakia today has outstanding scientists, particularly in the natural sciences, such as Academician Jaroslav Heyrovský, founder of polarography and Nobel Prize-winner for chemistry in 1959. Scientific work is centred in the Czechoslovak and Slovak Academies of Science, with 10,000 employees. Young scientists are being trained in almost all fields, with a very wide range of specialisation. The universities form a second scientific centre, with 100 faculties and 140,000 students (70,000 engaged in extra-mural study), including over 3,000 foreign students who are receiving stipends.

Education

While the promotion of science is a major public concern, education, too, receives much attention and material support. Both subjects, science and education, are so extensive and complex that special publications have been devoted to them. Readers with a deeper interest are referred to these.*)

Here we are concerned chiefly with how scientific information reaches the average Czechoslovak citizen outside the school system, and with the role it plays in his culture and his way of life.

Adult education

It is necessary to understand the yearning for culture and learning which, for historical reasons, grew in the Czech and Slovak nations and which became a measure of our ability to live and to have a right to existence. Two hundred years ago the two nations started their quest for the revival of national consciousness and indi-

*) Education (second edition), Orbis, Prague, 1963
University Education, Orbis, Prague, 1963

viduality. The depths to which the 17th century had hurled these peoples seemed bottomless, and the upward climb was accompanied by scepticism even on the part of the best of the learned men who loved their people. A country without a nobility or a wealthy bourgeoisie could not rely on its numbers, on its physical strength or on its material resources. Consequently, the intelligentsia, the teachers in the lowest schools, the lesser clergy, the first scientists, actors, poets and writers were held in great respect, and education was seen as a means to winning a place beside other advanced European nations. Throughout the 19th century the demand for an opportunity to develop their national cultures was prominent in Czech and Slovak political programmes.

To have one's own art, education, magazines, museums, libraries, theatre, publishing houses, choral societies — this was a goal of first importance. When independence had been won in 1918, the Republic had a widespread network of cultural and educational institutions, and illiteracy was almost completely eliminated.

Socialism has given the desire for knowledge new meaning. First of all it has created an urgent practical need for general and specialised knowledge. Thousands of people now engage in public life, in the work of government bodies, and hold responsible positions in trade unions, local government and other organisations, share in the running of industrial and agricultural enterprises, services, schools and cultural institutions. The demand for supplementary educational facilities has, therefore, risen sharply; however, the school system can satisfy only those who are interested in systematic, long-term study. Attention has therefore been turned to out-of-school educational institutions in factories or communities. Adult education, faced with this mass hunger for learning, is part of a veritable cultural revolution.





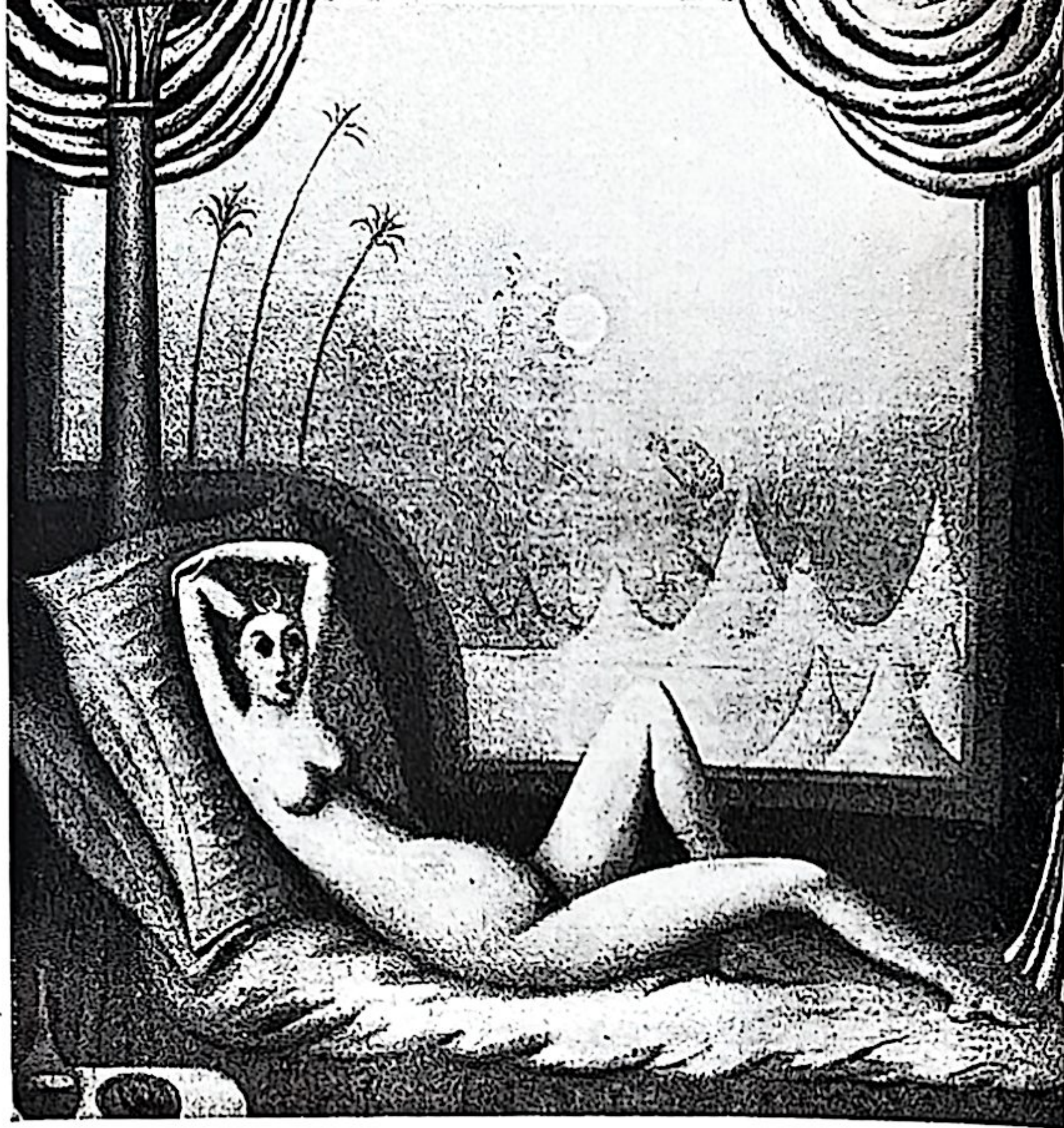
National Gallery – Prague, Czech Gothic

An exhibition



K. Nepraš: The Castle II, copper-nickel





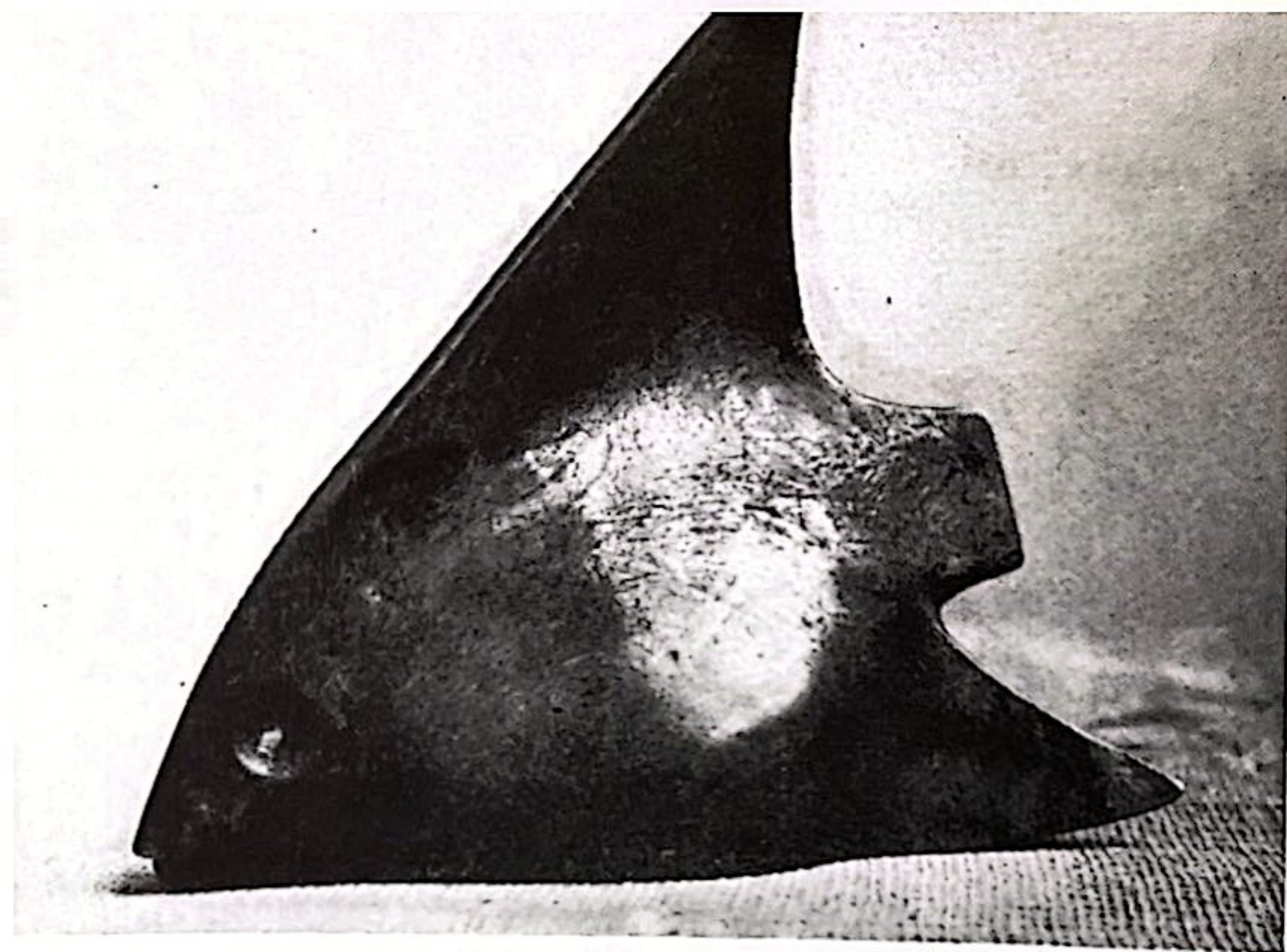
J. Zrzavý: Diana, oil

V. Hložník: Targets (from the series Dreams),
linocut



F. Tichý: Clown

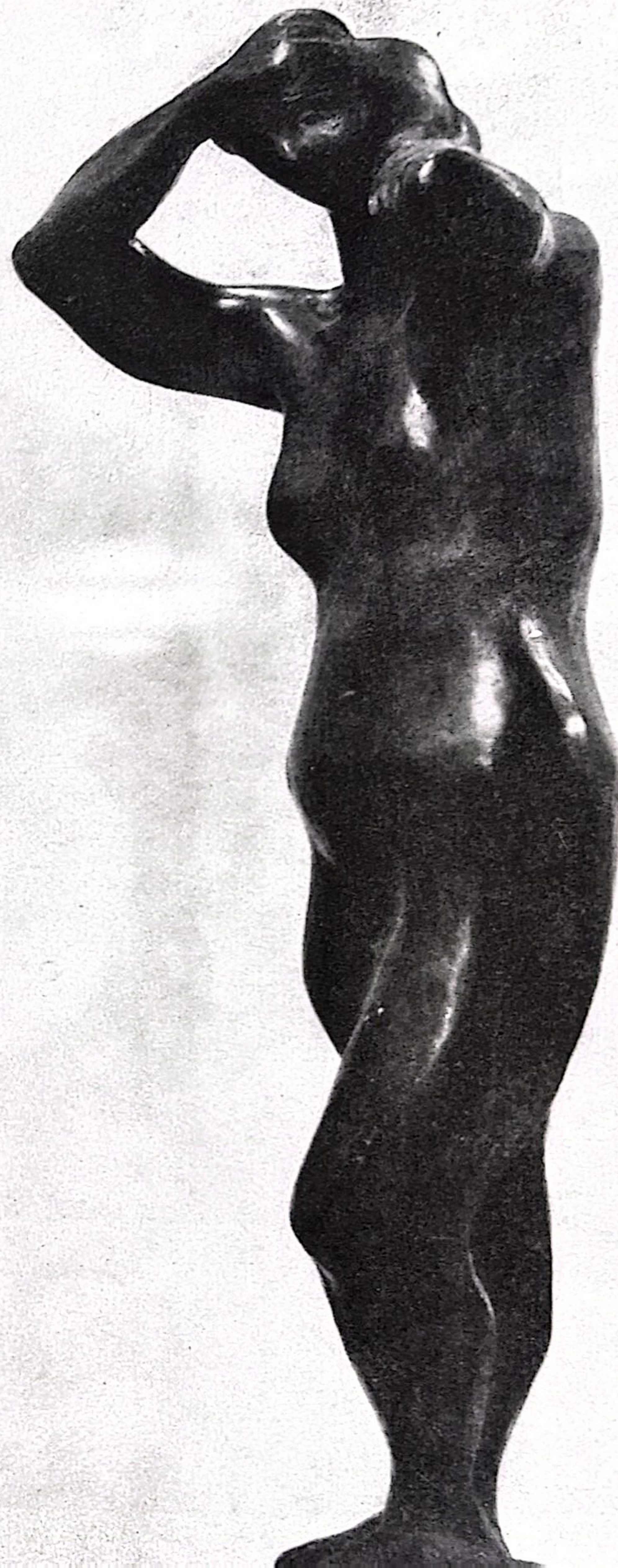


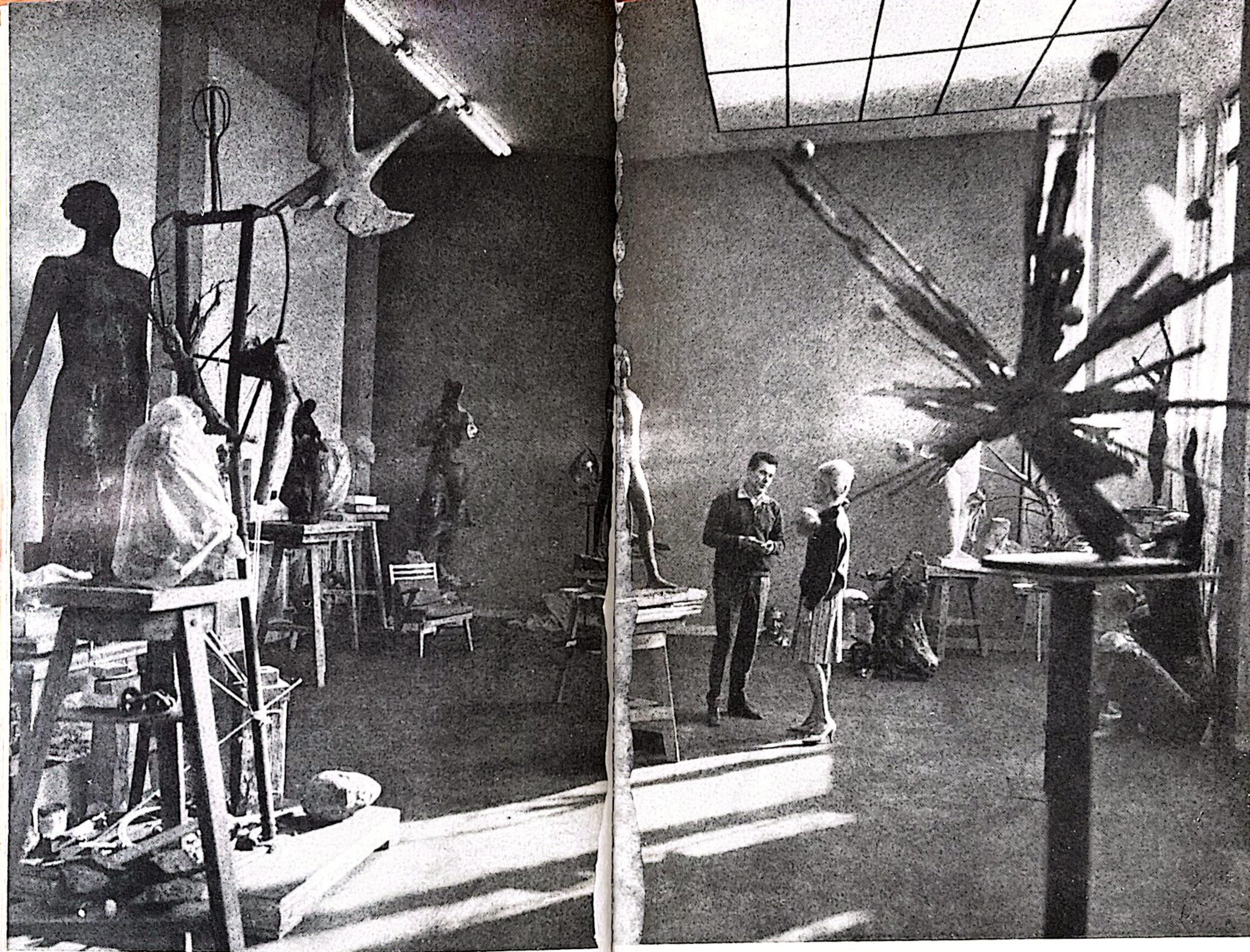


V. Vingler: Exotic Fish, wood

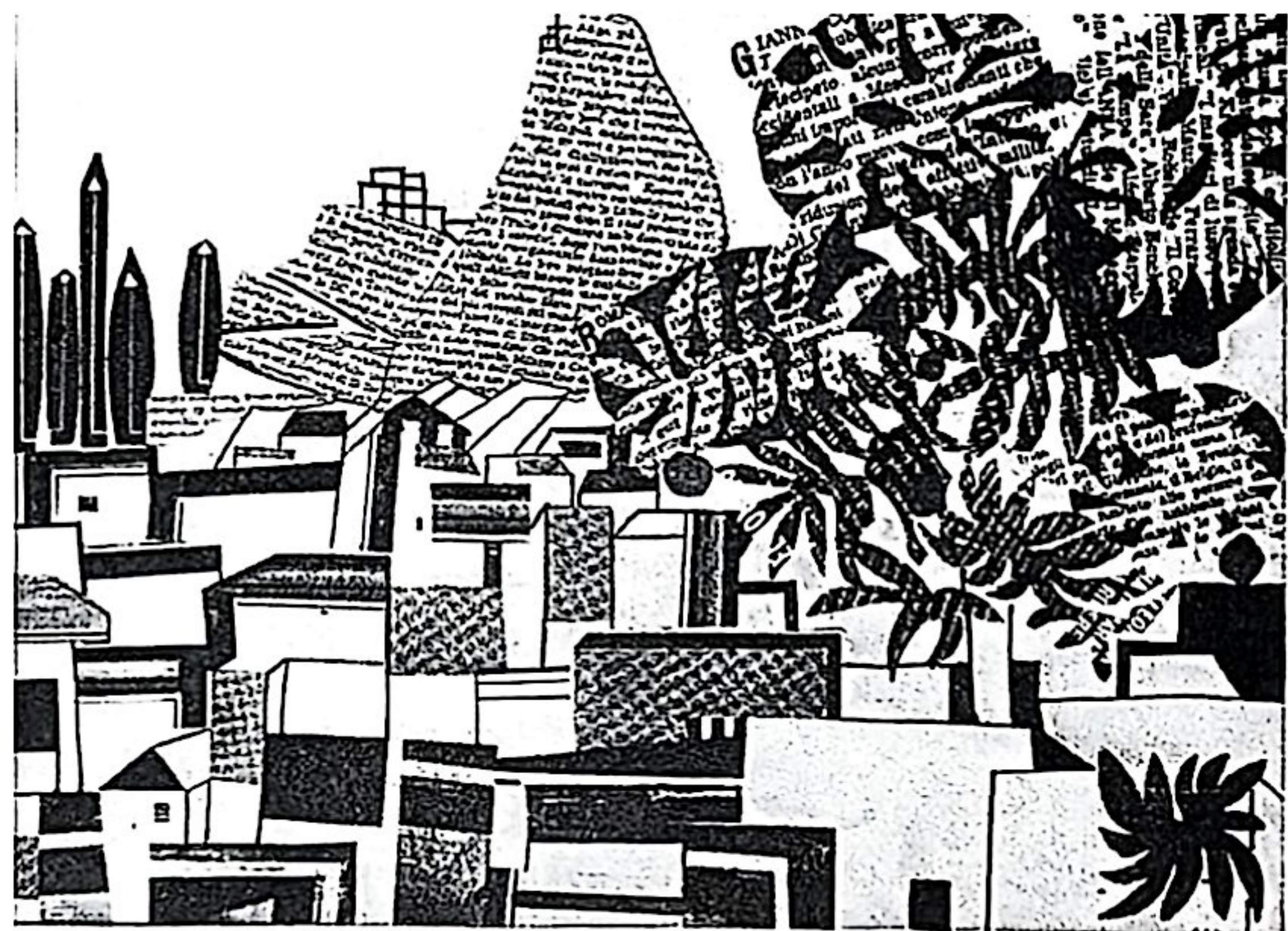
J. Kaplický: Standing Nude, plaster

M. Jirava: garden ceramics





T. Bártfay's studio



A. Hoffmeister: Oranges in Taormina, ink drawing and colour collage

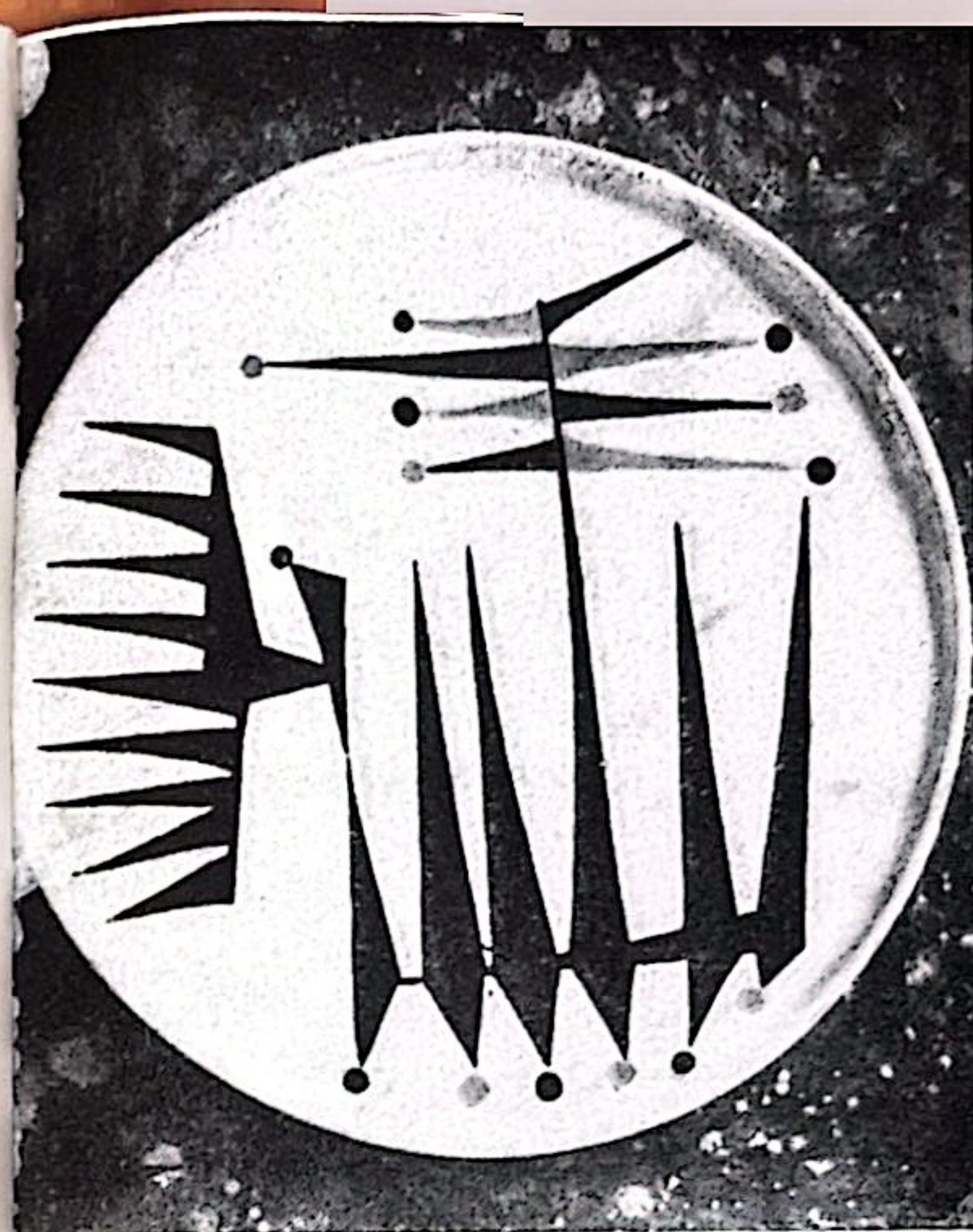


L. Guderna: Helena, charcoal

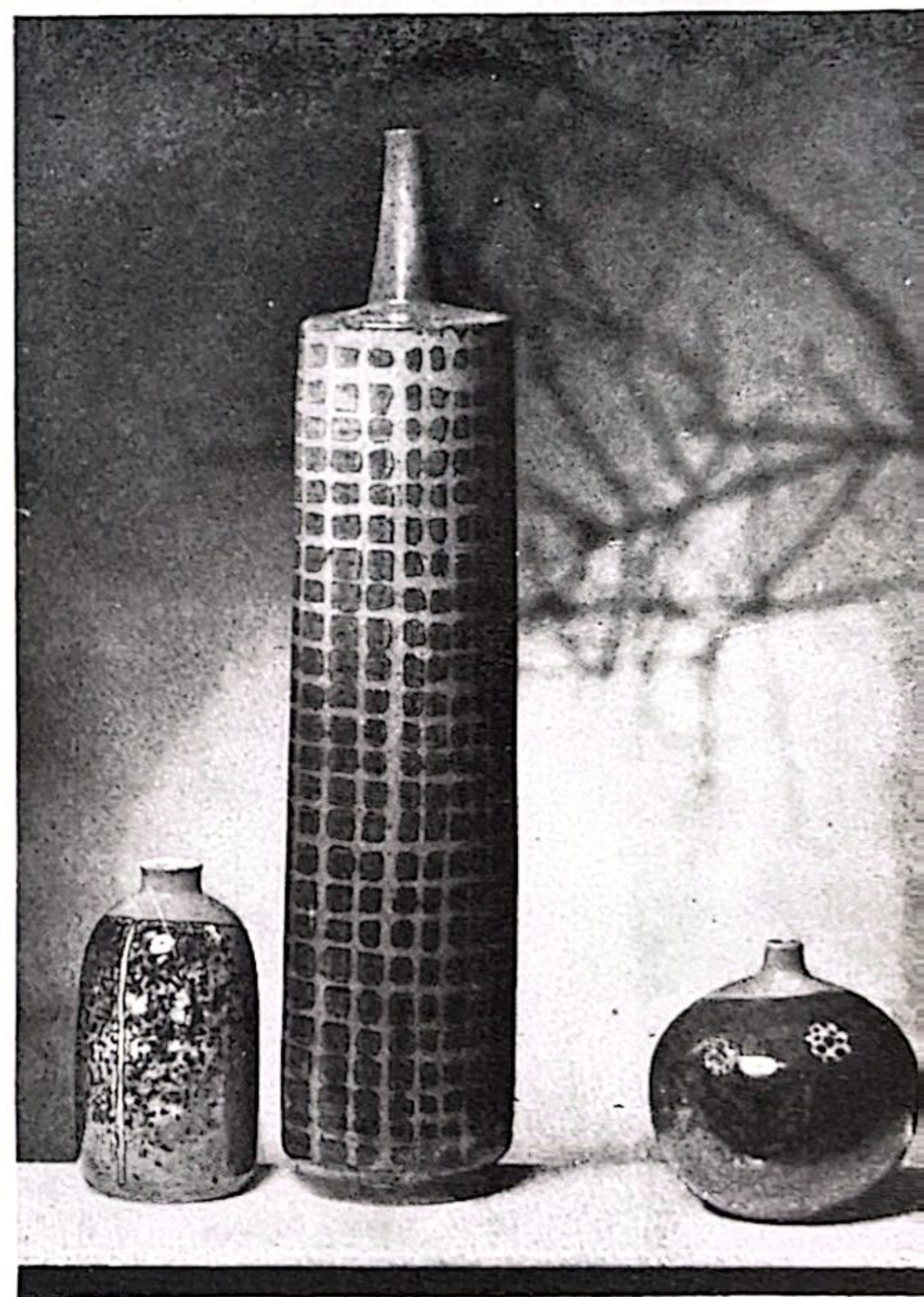


K. Chaba: Mánes Café, oil

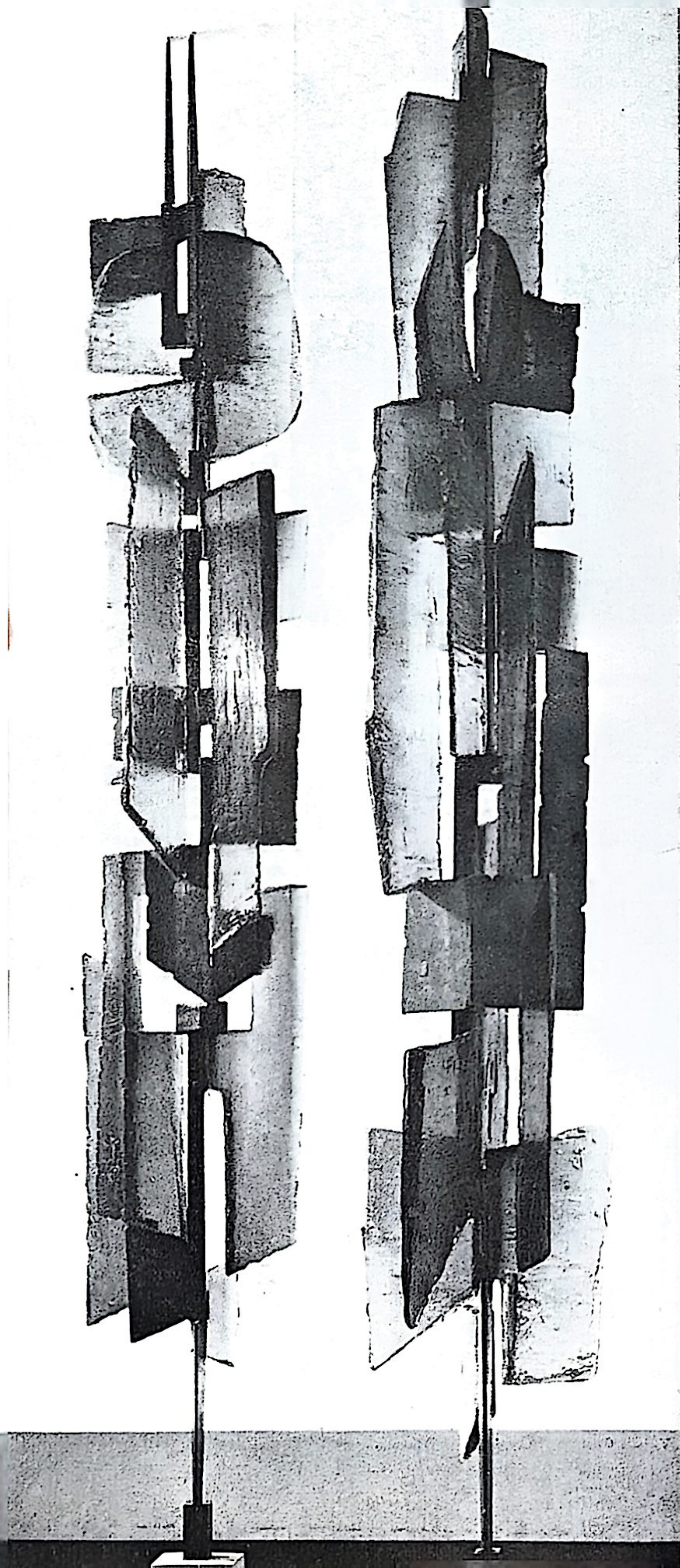
P. and J. Rada: Majolica plate



International Ceramics Exhibition, Prague 1962



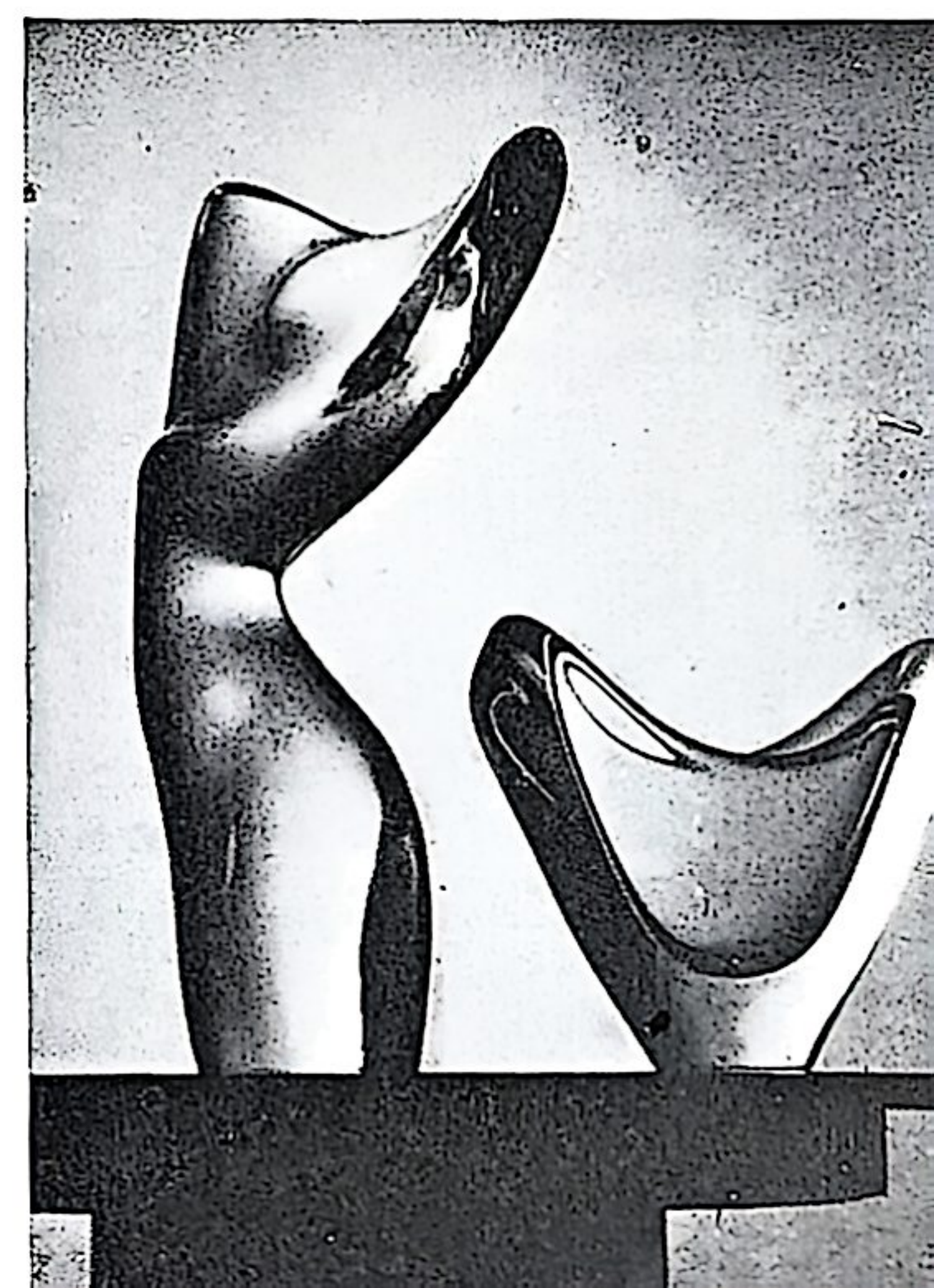
Majolica vases

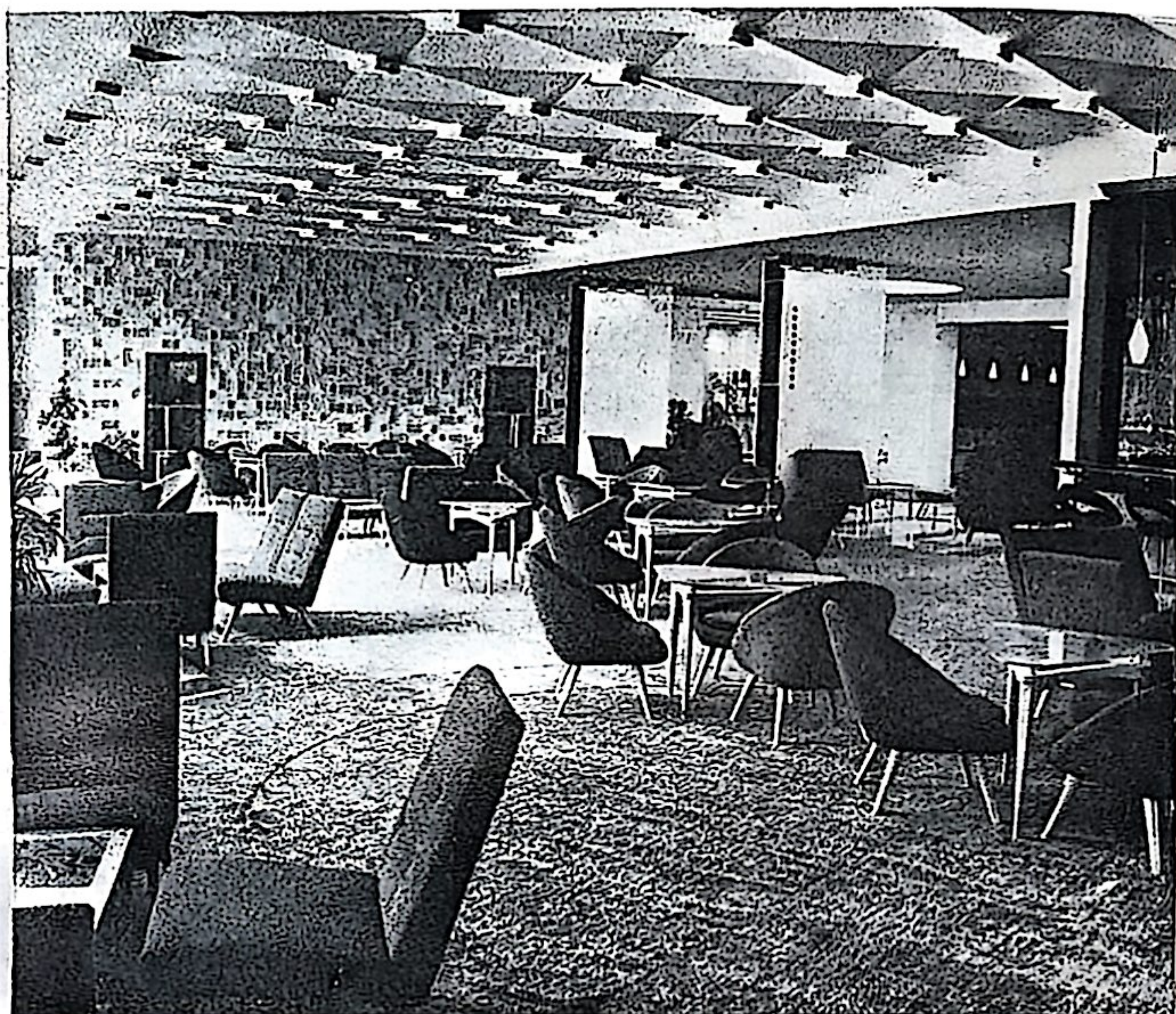


Wine glasses designed by J. Taraba

Glass figure and vase designed by M. Klinger

**S. Libenský,
J. Brychtová:
glass decorations
for the
Children's House
at Prague Castle**





The café of the International Hotel in Brno (architects: A. Krejza, M. Kramoliš)

Facilities of all types have been provided,*) mostly by local authorities or trade unions. They work according to a coordinated plan, usually drawn up for the period of a year. Central coordination is carried out by the Central Council for Adult Education, composed of representatives of the government, the trade unions, the youth and other public organisations, and experts in the field. These bodies support the adult education facilities financially, as none of them has a commercial character.

One of the main sponsors and initiators of this kind of popular education is the Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, which can call on some 50,000 specialists in various fields. The society works out plans for lecture cycles and courses, trains lecturers, publishes pamphlets and books on popular scientific subjects. It acts as a kind of brains trust, influencing the content and quality of adult education.

In recent years, people's academies and people's universities for science, technology and art, and people's conservatories have been established. They provide systematic education, usually in two-year courses, for people interested in the natural sciences, the humanities and music.

Workers in adult education are trained by the Institute for Adult Education and Journalism (faculties at Prague and Bratislava universities), and by numerous schools of adult education and librarianship. There is

*) In the Republic's 12,000 communities there are roughly:
 10,500 clubs open to the public
 40,000 libraries of all types
 3,740 cinemas
 400 museums and literary collections
 6 planetariums
 21 public observatories
 18 amusement parks

a special department for the training of librarians at Charles University. Some 800 "houses of culture" throughout the country are staffed by a small number of experts who direct and help a larger group of voluntary adult education workers.

Nationalities

National groups – besides the Czechs and Slovaks – have their own cultural and educational organisations and institutions, their libraries, ensembles, etc. – for example, the Polish Cultural-Educational Union (PZKO), and CSEMADOK, the association of Hungarian workers, and a corresponding Ukrainian organisation.

Gypsies

Special social and educational measures have been taken on behalf of the Gypsy population. Until recently (1959), the majority of Gypsies were migratory and maintained the style of life which they had followed unchanged for a thousand years, or lived in crowded settlements in eastern and central Slovakia. Yet many have become industrial workers, and from their ranks have come doctors and engineers. The measures are simple, but the demands on funds, education and patience are high. Continuous education is required; the settlement of Gypsy families in ordinary communities, courses in hygiene, in dressing, cooking, sewing, efforts to draw the people into community life, schools, constant friendly supervision. About 150,000 Gypsies are in this way becoming accustomed to a new way of life.

Folk art and amateur art

The widespread interest in amateur art was originally nourished by the unusually rich folk-lore of the country, which is still alive in a few districts. The national revival movement drew on the art of the villages, which for centuries had hardly changed their appearance or culture. Today Czech, Slovak and Moravian folk songs, music, poetry, tales, embroidery and architecture, with their colourful charm and simplicity are disappearing from the countryside as the way of life approaches that of the towns.

Popular artistic activity is changing under the impact of modern art forms which are taken up by the young people. Only about one-sixteenth of dance ensembles today maintain the old folk-lore traditions. Most of the groups have adopted the style of the small musical theatre, where amateurs from various fields of artistic activity can perform together.

This has brought new blood to the amateur theatre, in which about 180,000 people participate.

Every year competitions are held in all fields of amateur activity. Children compete and so do adults – almost one million people, all told.

Festivals

Festivals, usually linked with cultural anniversaries, are popular in the villages and small towns. There are few monuments to generals in this country: the celebrated men are poets, composers, artists. A festival usually takes its name from one of these and is held in his birthplace; for instance, festival perfor-

mances of Smetana's music are given at his native town of Litomyšl. Some festivals are not devoted to famous individuals but to song and dance, or the wine harvest, for example, the folk ensemble festivals at Strážnice and Východná.

Wider aspects

Czechoslovak cultural life, in its manifold manifestations, is bound up with the political, economic and social progress of the country, in which the driving force is the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Works by Czechs and Slovaks have found their place in the progressive culture of the world. Moreover, Czechoslovakia maintains cultural relations with many countries to the advantage of all concerned, and this applies not only to the other socialist states, but to the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and to European cultures, especially Italian, British, French, and German. Czechoslovakia also plays an active part in UNESCO and in other international cultural organisations.

In conclusion, a word from the author

The author of this booklet would be happy if this brief conducted tour should inspire in the reader a desire to know more about Czechoslovakia's cultural life. He believes that true culture can lead only to the brotherhood of peoples and nations. It can never be a messenger of death and destruction, or of wrath and hatred, but will always speak of truth, freedom, labour and friendship, humanity and the fulness of life.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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